

THE  
RISE and FALL  
OF THE  
HERESY  
OF  
*ICONOCLASTS;*  
OR,  
Image-Breakers.

Being a brief Relation of the Lives and Deaths  
of those Emperors of the *East*, who first  
set it up and maintain'd it, or zealously op-  
pos'd and finally crush'd it. From the  
Year 717 to 867.

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COLLECTED by R. M. *K*

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# ADVERTISEMENT to the READER.



*THE late Author of England's Conversion and Reformation compared, having been led by Inclination to bestow no small Pains upon a Review of the Controversies of the two last Centuries, bent his Endeavours upon furnishing the Lovers of Truth with the best Helps for settling them in a right Judgment upon the Points in debate. But the Compiling of the following Abridgement was the Result of another Design. He sometimes found it requisite, after long Application, to allow himself some Ease of Mind, and a Relaxation of Attention: Towards which, he own'd, that nothing had contributed so agreeably, nor afforded him so much profitable Diversion as the Perusal of the History of the Image-breakers. The Benefit, he was sensible, he had receiv'd from this Entertainment, determin'd him to bestow some part of his Time in drawing up the Subject into a narrower Compass, in hopes, that what he had found so diverting to himself, might probably prove no less instructive to others.*

*And that this Instruction may in no Manner be misapply'd by the Reader to his own Prejudice, he is to bear in Mind, that holy Images (that is, the Images of holy Persons) may be used in such various Manners, and respected in such different Degrees, that no Care can be too great, to go no further therein, than is approved by the Church. Some perhaps are persuaded, that as long as they do not take Images to have any Divinity in them, they need no farther Caution in the Use of them: And yet, it is certain, that Christians, who know, that Images are not Gods, may nevertheless be capable of running into great Excesses, and unwarrantable Practices by their Way of using them.*

*There is no doubt, but the Christians of Marseilles, about the latter End of the 6th Age, understood as well, as those of the 16th, that Images had no Divinity in them: And yet the Use, they made of them, appear'd so shocking to their Bishop Serenus, that he took a Resolution to remove them quite out of*

## Advertisement to the READER.

*all the Churches in his Diocese, as the most effectual Means to put a stop to the Disorder.*

*What this Disorder was, is not to be learn'd from History. But St. Gregory, who judg'd, that Serenus had done better, to season his Flock with due Instruction, than to deprive them of the Use of Images, never question'd, but the Flock had given their Pastor just Cause of Resentment, by running into Extravagances at the same Time, that they knew that Images were not Gods.*

*The Primitive Use of Images among Christians was, to keep up the Remembrance of holy Persons, and to revive the Thoughts of them in the Beholders. But if the Beholders began to address the Images, as they would have thought it their Duty to address the holy Persons represented by them, if visibly present; it was Time for Serenus to consider well of such Use, and guard his Flock against the Wiles and Delusions of Satan, of whose Thoughts he in all likelihood was not ignorant, as being warn'd, that he is always ready to sow his Tares of humane Fancies among the good Corn of God's saving Truths. If due Instruction will effectually answer this End, and the Flock be sensible of their Obligation to attend to it, the Pastors will have no need of looking about for other Expedients. Even the most ignorant of the Flock will understand and be aware, that as Images are not Gods, so they are neither Angels nor Men, nor any thing else, but what they are made of: That they have no Virtue, or any such Efficacy in them, as if the Persons represented by them, were more present to them, when made, than they were to the Materials before: And when, by their Means, they have rais'd their Thoughts to the Persons they represent, they will make their Addresses (whether by Words or by Actions) to those Persons, and not to their Images: And so give no Offence to others, nor make themselves obnoxious to the Imputation either of Idolatry, or of Stupidity.*

LEO



## Leo the Isaurian.



F all the Heresies, which had their Birth in the *Eastern Church*, that fruitful Mother of Novelties in Religion, that of the *Iconoclasts* or *Image-breakers* is the most surprizing as to the first Occasion of it, which was thus.

It happen'd about the Beginning of the seventh Century, that two *Jewish* Impostors, who set up for Prophets, had under that religious Mask drawn their Prince *Jezid*, the *Califf* of the *Saracens* in *Syria* into Measures, which proved fatal to him. Whereupon they were forced to fly to avoid the just Revenge of his Son and Successor *Moavie*, who had given Orders to seize them, where-ever they should be found. How happy had it been for Christendom, had they then fallen Victims to his just Resentment? What a Deluge of Christian Blood would it have saved? What numberless Scandals and Barbarities would it have prevented? But God's secret and impetrable Judgments had ordain'd Things otherwise. For they made their Escape effectually,

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and came safe into *Isauria*, a Province of the lesser *Asia*. Where, as they were one Day sitting near a Fountain to ease and refresh themselves, a young Man leading an Ass, that was loaden with small Merchandises, which he sold in the neighbouring Villages to get a poor Livelihood, came and sat down by them, in Hopes perhaps, that they would buy something of him.

The two *Jews* having for some Time fix'd their Eyes stedfastly upon him were surprized to see in One of so mean a Condition such a more than ordinary promising Aspect, and every Thing answerable to it in his Person, which exceeded the ordinary Size, and had more of the Hero than Pedlar in it. Whereupon they ask'd him, who and what he was; his Name, and from whence he came? To which the young Man answer'd, that his Name was *Conon*, that he was an *Isaurian* by Birth, that his Parents were poor, and got their Living by the daily Labour of their Hands. That finally, as to himself, he had chosen to follow a small pedling Trade in Hopes of becoming one Day rich enough to turn Merchant. Then one of the two, whether he had a familiar Spirit to suggest to him what he should say, or trusted to the Art of Divination notwithstanding his late ill Success. Or finally, whether he only thought that Chance might one Day happen to bring to pass, what he should boldly foretel with the Assurance of a Man inspired (for my Author does not determine the Matter, but only quotes his Vouchers) however it was, regarding the young Man with great Attention whilst he spoke, said to him, *Delay not, Conon, delay not to change your Name and Profession, and to pursue your happy Destiny, which calls you to the Throne. For I assure you it will*



*one Day infallibly raise you to the imperial Crown, if you do but, as you easily may, perform your Part towards the Accomplishing so glorious a Design.*

Young Conon surprized at a Discourse so much out of the way in all Appearance, suspected at first, that he only intended to pass a Jest upon him. But perceiving both the one and the other to be very serious upon the Matter, and finding his Heart already kindled with Ambition, resolved to push his Fortune to the utmost: Because he might at least gain Something, and could lose Nothing by so doing. Whereupon having ask'd them very resolutely, what he was to do to make the Event answer their Predictions? *To shew*, said they, *that we are in Earnest, and have no Design to put a Cheat upon you, we only demand of you, a Promise upon Oath, that when our Prophecy is accomplish'd, and you find yourself fix'd on the imperial Throne, you will then in Reward of the good Office we have done you grant us but one Request, which we shall then specify to you, and will be in your Power to perform.*

Young Conon, whom this open and candid Proceeding encouraged to have a favourable Opinion of their Sincerity, promised with Joy to perform whatever they should require of him; and thereupon, as being a Christian, went with them to a neighbouring Church dedicated to *St. Theodore*, where he swore solemnly to make good his Word, when demanded of him: This detestable and inconsiderate Oath made to the profess'd Enemies of Christianity, who might have demanded and obtain'd with the same Ease the Re-establishment of *Judaism*, this Oath, I say, which fill'd *Greece* with Blood and Confusion for above an hundred Years, and at long Run lost the *Greek* Emperors the whole Empire of the *West*, being thus made,

they parted satisfy'd on both Sides ; and *Conon*, who took the Name of *Leo*, and is known in all Histories by the Name of *Leo the Isaurian*, immediately quitted his poor Parents and little Trade, and list'd himself in the Troops of *Sisinius*, who commanded in *Isauria*. Sometime after the Emperor *Justinian* II. order'd him to march with his Army to *Misambria* a Town in *Thrace* upon the *Euxin* Sea, where he continued till that Prince who had been dethroned, was restored by the Help of the *Bulgarians*.

*Leo the Isaurian*, who watch'd all Opportunities to push his Fortune, here nick'd his Time to make himself known to the Emperor ; For he was one of the first that came to meet him, when he was upon his return to *Constantinople* ; and shew'd so much Zeal for his Service and Affection for his Person in making him a Present of five hundred Sheep, which was very acceptable to him on that Occasion, that he took him immediately into his Guards, and after his Restoration was so well pleased with the Turn of his Wit, that he became a kind of Confident or Favourite. But being render'd suspected to him by some of the Court, that were jealous of him, he removed him however with Honour, and sent him to make War upon the Barbarians beyond the *Euxin* Sea, where by his military Performances he gain'd the Reputation of Conduct and Valour.

In the mean Time *Justinian*, who by his execrable Cruelty had render'd himself odious to all Mankind, was massacred by his own Soldiers, whom he had sent to *Chersonesus* to put all the Inhabitants to the Sword. Upon whose Death the Army chose one *Philippus Bardanes*, one of the Commanders of the Fleet, a Man of Quality but extremely debauch'd, who dishonouring

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the Empire by his infamous Life, was in the second Year of his Reign seiz'd by his own Nobles, who plucking out his Eyes, proclaim'd Emperor his chief Secretary *Artemius*, whom they call'd *Anastasius*, a learned and experienced Man and a zealous Catholick.

*Leo*, who till then had made War upon the Barbarians, came and tender'd his Service to this new Prince, who received him very favourably, and gave him in Reward of his Services the Command of the Army and Government of the *East*, where he soon found the Occasion he look'd for to satisfy his Ambition, and mount the Throne even with Honour. For the naval Army, which the Emperor had sent against the *Saracens*, having kill'd their General, and revolted to screen themselves from Punishment, took it in their Heads to proclaim in an umultuous Manner one *Theodosius* a Farmer of the publick Revenues, in spite of the Resistance he made, and maintain'd him on the Throne against all the Power of *Anastasius*, who finding himself closely besiged in *Nicea*, and *Constantinople* seiz'd, and himself abandon'd by almost all his Friends, yielded the Empire to his Rival, and became a Monk at *Theffalonica*.

Here it was that *Leo* thought it behoved him to improve the Opportunity offer'd him by his good Fortune to mount the imperial Throne with Honour under Pretence of Revenging the Injustice done to his Master and Benefactor. He therefore declared immediately against *Theodosius*, and was seconded by his whole Army, who abhorr'd with Indignation the ridiculous and phantastical Choice of a Farmer preferably to so many deserving Persons. His next Business was to engage in his Interest *Artabasdes* the General of



the imperial Troops in *Armenia*, whom he decoy'd by a Promise of his Daughter in Marriage, and the chief Place at Court. The only Thing now remaining was to tie up the Hands of the *Saracens*, who had invaded *Capadocia*, from opposing his Promotion; These he gain'd by the Promise of an advantagious Peace, and other large Rewards. And so after having been proclaim'd Emperor by all the Troops of the *East*, and acknowledg'd by the *Saracens* themselves, he march'd by long Journeys to *Nicomedia*, and *Calcedon* just over against *Constantinople*.

Here it was, that whilst he was preparing to pass the *Bosphorus*, the holy Patriarch St. *Germain* met him to intercede in Behalf of *Theodosius*, who was sensible of his Incapacity of Governing an Empire, which he had accepted against his Will. He therefore did himself Justice by following the Example of *Anastasius*, and retiring into a Monastery, and yielding up the Empire to *Leo* only on Condition to have his Life secured, which the Patriarch easily obtain'd.

Thus *Leo* the *Isaurian* having clear'd the Way from all Obstacles to the Crown, enter'd *Constantinople* on the 25th of *March* An. 717, and took Possession of the Empire by an impenetrable Secret of the Judgments of God, who would suffer the Predictions of the two Impostors to be accomplish'd, and one of the most wicked Men upon the Face of the Earth, as will appear hereafter, to be rais'd from the meanest Condition to the Empire of the World, which he made subservient to the Malice of those two Impostors by Altering the publick Worship, which was then, and had been establish'd for several hundred Years both in the *East* and *West*.

This



This was the Fruit of *Leo's* rash Oath to the two *Jews*, who as soon as they heard of his Elevation to the Throne, fail'd not to come immediately to *Constantinople* to challenge the Performance of it. Upon which he ask'd them, what it was they demanded of him? To which they answer'd, that they neither ask'd Riches, nor Power, nor any temporal Advantages, but only this one Thing, *viz.* that since God had positively forbid Idolatry, he would utterly abolish all Images and Pictures of *Christ*, his Mother, and pretended Saints, which they said were no better than Idols, throughout his whole Empire: Upon the Performance whereof they promised him that he should live to be an hundred Years old, and enjoy all that Time a prosperous Reign.

*Leo*, who was covetous on the one Hand, and therefore afraid least their Demands might run too high for him, and had little or no Sense of Religion on the other, was most agreeably surprized to find himself brought off upon such easy Terms, which he thought would cost him nothing but an absolute Command, when he should find himself in a Condition to make himself obey'd. But what charm'd him most was the Promise of an hundred Years, and Reigning prosperously all that Time. But here the unhappy Wretch found himself at long Run miserably deceiv'd; and it might have open'd his Eyes in due Time, had he not been prepossess'd to a Degree of Madness. For he found himself languishing under a Dropsy and his End approaching long before the promised Period; and a great Part of his Reign, though prosperous at first, was but a long Train of publick Calamities, and visible Judgments of God; as will

appear in the Sequel of this History: so that both Parts of the *Jewish* Prediction proved false.

But be that as it will, he answer'd the two *Jews* that to make a Change in the publick worship was a dangerous Attempt, and might occasion a general Revolt, and that to undertake a Business of that Moment unseasonably was the Means to ruin all. That therefore it was necessary to dissemble for some Time, till his Authority was so well establish'd, that all would be forced to submit to it. When his Affairs should be in this Condition, as he hoped they would be very Soon, that he would then perform faithfully what he had promised, and so he dismiss'd his *Jews*, of whom we shall hear no more.

From that Time forward *Leo* began to cover his Design with a profound Dissimulation, and counterfeit upon all Occasions the zealous Catholick to prevent the least Suspicion of the contrary. For which End he made it his first Business to gain the Esteem of the Patriarch *St. Germain*, who was a Prelate of extraordinary Merit, eminent for Holiness of Life, and a zealous Defender of the Catholick Faith; and therefore beloved and esteem'd by his whole Flock. So that *Leo* could not but see it absolutely necessary to engage a Person of this Character in his Interest, as he did by all Means possible. For he received the imperial Crown from his Hands, and at his Coronation swore Solemnly to preserve the Catholick Faith in it's Purity, and suffer no Alteration to be made in the Doctrine or Practice of the Church: Which gave great Satisfaction to the Patriarch, who took him to be very Sincere. Nay *Leo* push'd his Hypocrisy still farther, and wrote a very Orthodox Profession of his Faith to the Pope; who charm'd with such an authentick Testimony  
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of his Faith received him into his Communion, and order'd great Honours to be done to him every where, particularly at *Rome*, where according to Custom his Pictures were received with great Pomp.

Thus he dissembled; because it was not yet seasonable to declare himself for Fear of the *Saracens*; who finding themselves to have been imposed upon by fair Promises without any Effect, had attack'd him in the very Heart of the Empire both by Sea and Land, but were entirely defeated contrary to all human Expectation. After which he had the same Success against some Rebels at home, whom he reduced with little Trouble; and to complete his Happiness had at the same Time a Son and Heir, who was call'd *Constantine*, and baptized by the holy Patriarch *St. Germain*: But in the Ceremony foul'd the baptismal Font; which was regarded as an ominous Presage of the Monster of Impiety, he would one Day prove to be; and occasion'd his Acquiring the infamous Sirname of *Copronymus* by which he is distinguish'd in all Histories. After which the Empress *Mary* was solemnly crown'd, as likewise the young *Copronymus*, and proclaim'd *Augustus* with a general Applause.

Such a long Train of prosperous Successes, which *Leo* regarded not only as the Effects of the *Jewish* Predictions, but as sure Pledges of his future Prosperity, and whereby his Authority was now so firmly establish'd, that he thought he had nothing to fear either at home, or from abroad, made him at length resolve to throw off the Mask, and publish an Edict for the Abolishing of all Images and Pictures; to which he was still more violently push'd on by two profligate Wretches, to wit, *first* by one *Constantin* Bishop of *Nacolia* a  
Town

Town in *Phrygia*, a Man publickly infamous for Lewdness, excessively ignorant, and destitute of Honour, Conscience, and Religion : For which his own Flock rose up against him, and obliged him to fly for Safety to *Constantinople* with another as wicked as himself call'd *Bezer*, who from a Christian had turn'd *Mahometan* to purchase his Liberty of the *Saracens*, among whom he was a Slave. At his coming to *Constantinople*, as he was a Man of an extraordinary Strength of Body, and had a good Stock of Wit, he was soon made known to the Emperor, who took a liking to him, which was much encreased, when he found in him a Conformity of Sentiments relating to Images and Pictures, which *Saracens* abhor no less than *Jews*.

This *Bezer* therefore, and the Bishop of *Nacolia*, who had likewise recommended himself by being a zealous *Iconoclast*, were the two Persons, to whom *Leo the Isaurian*, who till then had personated the Catholick, first discover'd his Design, and consulted how he should go about to execute it Succesfully. For he was still under some Apprehension of a popular Commotion : Because the Change he intended to introduce regarded not barely a speculative Point of Religion, like the six first Heresies condemn'd by the six first general Councils, but an outward practical Devotion of long Standing, and introduced by *Constantin* himself, who surely was no *Idolater*, but the great destroyer of *Idols*, and had put the imperial City under the peculiar Protection of the Blessed *Virgin*, whose Statues being set up in a hundred Places, and particularly before the Gates of the City, were honour'd by all the People with a singular Devotion, and the same great and religious Prince amongst other noble Monuments of his Piety, had



had erected in the great Place before the Palace two beautiful Statues, one of the Saviour of the World representing the good Shepherd bringing home upon his Shoulders his lost Sheep; and the other of the Prophet *Daniel* amidst the Lions. So that how resolute soever *Leo* was, he was not without some Fear of the People's rising up in Arms, if he furnish'd them with so plausible a Pretence as their maintaining the Honour and Faith of the great *Constantine*. But the two wicked Villains above-mention'd flatter'd him so agreeably upon the Greatness of his Power, which no one would dare to oppose, that they persuaded him to delay no longer, but begin with a bold Step, and surprize the unprepared Minds of the Senate and People with a sudden and unexpected Blow, which would in a manner stun them before they should have Time to think and recollect themselves into any regular Resolution.

This then *Leo* resolved to do without Hesitation: And accordingly order'd the Senate to be assembled, whom he told in few Words, that in Acknowledgment of the signal Favours he had received from the Hands of God he was resolved to destroy the Idolatry, which had crept insensibly into the Church; and therefore declared, that it was his positive and absolute Will, that all the Images of *Jesus Christ*, his Mother, and the Saints should be destroy'd, because they were no better in Reality than so many Idols, to which a Religious Honour due to God alone was paid. • Having spoke thus he turn'd his Back upon them without expecting an Answer, and left the whole Senate under a Consternation more easily to be imagined than express'd, and gave immediate Orders for the Execution of this irreligious Design. So that the Heresy of *Iconoclasts*, or *Image-breakers*

*breakers* commenced from that Day, which was in the eighth Year of his Reign, and which he had till then conceal'd in his Heart upon politick Motives.

But as it is the usual Practice of Courtiers to make the Prince's Will the Rule and Standard of their Faith, he soon had a great many Followers, especially when they saw the violent Means he took to make himself obey'd. For as soon as he had declared his Will to the Senate, he immediately sent his Guards with their Officers to throw down in open Day and Sight of the whole imperial City the beautiful Image of *Christ* placed by the great *Constantine* above the principal Gate of the Palace, which faced the great imperial Place, and was honoured with a singular Devotion by all the People; who alarm'd with the News of the sacrilegious Attempt flock'd in a tumultuous manner from all Parts of the City to oppose the Execution of it; and because the Officers and Guards, who thought themselves Strong enough to disperse a confused Populace, went on resolutely to execute their Orders, the enraged People set upon them with that Fury, that after several of them and even some principal Officers were left dead upon the Place, the rest were forced to retire for their own Security. The very Women signalized their Zeal on this Occasion even to an Excess. For whilst the Men were engaged with the Guards, one *Jovinus* a bolder and rasher Officer than the rest having got up to the Top of a Ladder, which he had rear'd up against the Palace Gate to break down the abovesaid Image of our Saviour, the Women ran in Crouds, threw down the Ladder with the Officer upon it, and in the Transport of their Fury left him dead upon the

the Place with the many Wounds they added to the Bruise of his Fall.

*Leo* resolv'd to revenge this Affront push'd his Resentment to an Excels of Cruelty to shew he was Master and would be obey'd. For having secured all the chief Posts of the City with strong Guards to prevent a second Rising of the Populace, he caused several Persons eminent for Piety and Learning, who had been unconcerned in the Tumult, to be apprehended, and in Hopes of either prevailing on or intimidating others by their Example he gave them their Choice either to submit upon the Spot to his Will, or prepare themselves for the severest Punishments. But finding these generous Christians immoveable in their Resolution of Dying a thousand Deaths rather than renounce their Faith, he caused some of them to be most inhumanly tortured, others to have their Hands cut off: Some again to have their Eyes pluck'd out, and others to be torn to Pieces with Whips, and great Numbers to suffer a lingering Martyrdom in Banishment or Prisons. In a Word, after having discharg'd his Fury a thousand several Ways on all that oppos'd his Will, he gave the finishing Stroke, as I may call it, by an Act of Barbarity, scarce to be equall'd in History, and which must render his Memory execrable to all Posterity.

There was a sort of College at *Constantinople* in a magnificent Palace built by the great *Constantin* for the Entertainment of learned Men, who taught young Scholars all Sciences gratis. The Head or Principal of this College was chosen out of the most learned Men of the whole Empire, and by way of Honour and Distinction was stiled the *universal Master*. He had under him twelve others Doctors, who had been his Scholars, whom



whom he judg'd to excel most in the particular Science, to which they had apply'd themselves, and taught publickly all such as flock'd thither from every Part of the Empire for their Improvement. In short, they were so highly esteem'd, that Emperors themselves often consulted them in Matters of Importance; and as a Token of their Esteem had heap'd all Sorts of Favours upon them in Presents of stately Furniture, Vessels of Gold and Silver, and beautiful Ornaments of their Church. But above all had enrich'd their College with a Library for the Use both of Scholars and Masters, which was look'd upon as the greatest Treasure of Greece. For they say it was compos'd of six hundred thousand choice Books; and amongst other Prodigies of Art had *Homer's* whole *Iliad* and *Odysse* distinctly writ in Letters of Gold upon one Gut of a Dragon of sixscore Foot long.

'Tis true, that about two hundred Years before in the Reign of *Basiliscus* this Library was almost entirely consumed by Fire, but soon after repair'd in some Measure. For what with such Books as were saved together with the Dragon's Gut, and others that were collected from other Parts, in the Time of *Leo* it had yet 3000, 300 choice Volumes under the Care of the *universal Master* and his twelve Doctors.

He therefore consider'd, that if he could but bring these eminent Men into his Measures, he should carry all before him without any Opposition, and therefore order'd them to be sent for to Court, where what with very bad Reasons, what with Caresses, Threats of Punishments and Promises of Rewards, he did his utmost to bring them to a Compliance; but all in vain. Nay on the contrary they endeavour'd by all the strongest

Reasons



Reasons to convince him of his Error, and even threaten'd him with the Judgments of God, if he persisted in it.

*Leo* enraged at this generous Resistance resolved to be reveng'd of them in the most barbarous Manner, and make them such Examples of his brutal Rage, as should strike all Men's Hearts with Terror. For having order'd them to be shut up all together in their College, he placed Guards at all the Avenues to hinder any one from Escaping; and then encompassing the House with Brushwood and Straw, he commanded Fire to be set to it in the Night; and so these excellent Men were all burnt alive, and the whole House together with the Library reduced to Ashes, to the irreparable Loss of whole Christendom. A strange diabolical Pride in an ignorant Layman to prefer his own private Judgment to that of the most learned Men of the Empire! And think himself hainously affronted in being contradicted by them! But he was so intoxicated with the Thoughts of Reigning prosperously to the hundredth Year of his Age, that he shut his Eyes against all the Light of Reason, and Sentiments of common Humanity: Though he had during his whole Reign the sensible Mortification to see himself opposed by all Men of known Probity and Learning, and only follow'd by Men of lost Reputation, whose scandalous Characters were a Dishonour to his Cause.

In the mean Time the holy Patriarch Saint *Germain*, who had his Heart pierced with Grief to see the extreme Desolation of his Flock, used all Endeavours possible to draw the Emperor out of the Gulf of Impiety, into which he had plunged himself, and remonstrated frequently to him the gross Error he had been mislead into  
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by the profess'd Enemies of Christianity. But perceiving that the Emperor did not despair of making a Profelyte of him, he told him with a generous Christian Liberty, that he was ready to suffer the most grievous Torments, rather than tolerate so scandalous an Innovation in the Doctrine of the Church; and would shed the last Drop of his Blood with Joy in Defence of the Honour paid to the Image of him, who had shed his precious Blood to renew God's Image in our Souls. But he did not receive at that Time the wish'd for Crown of Martyrdom, but was dismiss'd by *Leo* (though it was but by Way of Amusement) even with some Hopes of his entering into himself.

Of all this the holy Patriarch sent an exact Account to Pope *Gregory II.* who thereupon wrote two excellent exhortatory Epistles upon the Subject of Images to the Emperor, and at the same Time warn'd him of the Danger he expos'd himself to of losing his whole Authority in the *West*, if he continued to make War upon *Christ* and his holy Mother by dishonouring their Images. In effect, as soon as the News of the Emperor's Edict at *Constantinople*, and the Outrages committed on the Images of *Christ* and his blessed Mother was spread abroad, both *Rome* and the other Towns of *Italy*, who till then had acknowledged his Authority, conceived so great a Horror of that detestable Fact, that they rose up unanimously and pull'd down his Images, which they had set up, as was the Customy, with great Respect. Even the other Princes of the *West*, who though not subject to him kept his Images to do him Honour, treated them in the same Manner to revenge the Affront he had put upon that of the Saviour of the World. Nay

*Luitprand*

*Luitprand* King of the *Lombards* proceeded farther. For seeing all the People of *Ravenna* risen up against their *Exarch*, who had attempted to execute the wicked Orders of *Leo* in pulling down Images, he sat down before the Town, and made himself Master of it in a very few Days.

And here it was, that the generous Pope *Gregory*, though he had been very ill used by *Leo*, who in Answer to his Letter had threaten'd him with the utmost Effects of his Rage, yet hoping still to mollify, and even reclaim him, had done all that lay in his Power to prevent the Revolt of the *Italians*, and defend the Dominions of the Empire against the *Lombards*, knowing that the *Exarch* was fled to *Venice* to demand Succours of that Republick for the Recovery of *Ravenna*, prevail'd so effectually by his good Offices, that the *Exarch* was soon after restored.

The Pope, who thought that *Leo* would be sensible of so signal a Piece of Service, applied more earnestly to him by Letters to abandon his unjust Design and return to his Duty. But *Leo*, who resented the Pope's steady Opposition, and was insensible of the Advantage he had received by his Means, was resolved to rid his Hands of a Person, who he saw would always be an Obstacle to his main Design: And as he was not only cruel, but mean and base in his Temper, and stuck not at any dirty Expedient to compass his End, perceiving that it would be a difficult Matter to destroy by open Force a Pope, who by his extensive Goodness and Charity had gain'd the Hearts of all the *Romans*, resolved to have Recourse to a Contrivance of the blackest Nature to gain his Point, which he look'd upon



as infallible. For he sent secret Orders to *Marin* Governor of *Rome* to lend a helping Hand to three profligate Villains, viz. *Basil* a Captain, *Jourdain* an Officer of the Emperor's Household, who were to be the Assassins, and one *John* a Subdeacon, who was in the Pope's Service, and was to give Notice to the other two of the first fair Opportunity, that should present itself of imbruing their Hands in his Blood. But God, who watch'd over his faithful Servant disposed Things so, that he could never find a proper Time to execute his execrable Parricide. The Emperor therefore, who imagined that the Indolence and Negligence of his principal Officers occasion'd the Inexecution of his Orders, sent the *Patrice Paul* to command in *Italy* in Quality of *Exarch*. But before the three Villains had it in their Power to give the Blow, the Conspiracy was happily discover'd by the *Romans*; who seizing on the Persons of *Jourdain* and the Subdeacon put them immediately to Death; and *Basil* escaped the same Fate by taking Shelter in a Monastery, where he did Penance for the rest of his Life between four Walls.

In the mean Time, the *Exarch* had positive Orders from the Emperor to make away with the Pope by Assassination, if the other Contrivance fail'd, or at least to secure his Person. But finding this impracticable, because Pope *Gregory*, who was the Darling of the *Romans*, was continually guarded by them with so much Watchfulness and Care, that he despair'd of surprising his Person, he resolv'd to employ open Force to make Good the Promise he had made *Leo*, to bring him to *Constantinople* either alive or dead. In order whereunto he gather'd hastily some Troops partly out of *Ravenna*, partly out of

of the Army he had always on Foot against the *Lombards* and sent them to *Rome* to seize the Pope by Force, and bring him to *Ravenna*. But as this Attempt was foreseen and prevented, it miscarry'd even before it came to the Point of Execution. For the *Lombards* having join'd the *Romans* in Defence of the Pope were too strong for the Exarch's Army, whose March they stopp'd near *Spoletum*, and obliged them to abandon their Enterprize, and return back to *Ravenna*.

What a sensible Mortification was this to a Man of *Leo's* Pride to see himself both hated and despised, and with all his Power unable to dispose of the Life of a single unarm'd Man. But as Rage and Pride, when unrestrain'd turn into Folly or Madness, *Leo* perceiving that neither Treachery nor Force had prevail'd, be-thought himself of the most ridiculous Expedient that ever was thought of, to do that by his bare Name and unarm'd Authority, which he had in vain attempted by Force of Arms; and thereupon sent Orders to the Exarch to publish at *Rome* and other imperial Towns of *Italy* an Edict ready penn'd, commanding all Images in Churches to be destroy'd with a Promise of ample Rewards to the Pope, if he obey'd, and declaring him Guilty of Treason and deprived of his pontifical Dignity in Case of Non-compliance.

Never was there such a sudden and universal Revolution as on this Occasion, but principally at *Rome* when the Edict was brought thither. For *Gregory* perceiving now that *Leo* kept no Measures, and struck not at his Person only, but Religion itself, had first Recourse to the spiritual Arms of his Ministry, to stop the Course

of this execrable Edict, and hinder the Poisson from spreading. He therefore excommunicated solemnly the Exarch, and all his Accomplices, and then sent Letters to the *Venetians*, the King of the *Lombards*, and all the imperial Towns in *Italy*, to exhort them to Steddiness in the Catholick Faith, and to oppose with all their Force the Execution of the impious Edict.

These Letters made such an Impression upon all the People in *Italy*, that even those who were often Enemies before, *Venetians*, *Lombards* and *Romans* join'd all in one Body, animated with the same Spirit, declaring that they would defend the Catholick Faith, and the Pope's Life with the last Drop of their Blood. But as it is difficult in the first Heat of a popular Commotion to keep within the Bounds of a blameless Defence, both *Romans*, and other Cities of *Italy* took up Arms, jointly with the *Venetians*, and having destroy'd all the Images of *Leo* carry'd their Zeal beyond what the Pope intended, and renounced all Subjection to him; though the Pope, who always hoped to reclaim that unhappy Prince, disapproved of their violent Proceedings.

But there happen'd two Things, which confirm'd the People in their Resolution of shaking off the Yoke, and put an End to the Emperor's Authority in *Italy*. *Exbilaratus* Governor of *Naples* for the Emperor, who had been importuned by the Exarch, to signalize himself by some important Piece of Service, for their common Master, tamper'd underhand with the common People of *Campania* to receive the Emperor's Edict, and conform to the Religion of their Prince. He had over and above suborn'd some Men to assassinate the Pope, and encouraged them to it with the Promise of great Rewards:

Which

Which base Proceeding affected the Catholicks with so much Horror, that shutting their Eyes against all other Considerations, they took up Arms tumultuously against their Governor, who not able to resist so general a Revolt, was massacred together with his Son and principal Officer. On the other Hand the Exarch *Paul* having prevail'd on several at *Ravenna* with the Views of Interest and Preferment to turn *Iconoclasts*, those, who adhered to the ancient Religion, and were the stronger Party could not bear it and took up Arms: So that there was a kind of civil War between the two Parties, who endeavour'd to destroy each other. But the Catholicks prevailing, the *Iconoclasts* were all sacrificed, and the Exarch himself was massacred in the Tumult, whereby not only *Ravenna*, but almost all the Towns depending of it were irrecoverably lost to the Emperor, and deliver'd up to the King of the *Lombards*.

These unhappy Successes, as being the very Reverse of the uninterrupted Prosperity foretold by the *Jewish* Impostors, had no other Effect upon *Leo's* Mind, than to enrage him still more than ever against the Catholick Faith. For though he had till then used the holy Patriarch *St. Germain* with some Humanity in Hopes of rendering him more flexible, he then resolved to put his Constancy to the last Trial. But finding, that instead of complying or even dissembling, he attack'd his Herefy openly both in his Discourses and Writings, and had even confuted the wicked Bishop of *Nacolia* publickly, he took a Resolution to rid his Hands of him either by Death or Banishment, if his last Efforts proved unsuccessful. Having therefore sent for him, he told him he would not suffer any longer



the Patriarch of the imperial City to seduce the People, and be a profess'd Abetter of Idolatry, and as nothing is so bold and positive as Ignorance, he told him that all the Fathers of past Ages, and the Emperors his Predecessors had been Idolaters. To which the holy Patriarch answer'd, by shewing the infinite Difference there was between the christian and heathen Worship, and remonstrating by the strongest Reasons, that Persons may be either honour'd or dishonour'd in their Images, as is obvious to common Sense, and that therefore abusing or destroying the Images of *Christ* was making War upon *Christ* himself in his Images; which threw the Emperor into such a Rage, that he gave the Patriarch a violent Blow upon the Face, without regard to his sacred Character and Age: And having loaded him with a great Deal of foul Language, and been very profuse of his Threats, order'd him to leave the Palace.

After which his whole Thoughts were bent upon Means to deprive him of his patriarchal See; and to colour it over with some Appearance of Justice on the one Hand, and deprive him of the Glory of being thought to suffer for the Faith on the other, he suborn'd a Priest call'd *Anastasius*, one of the Bishop's domestick Chaplains, and familiar Confidants to be a Spy upon his Actions, and by his giving a malicious Turn to any Thing he should see or hear, accuse him of having caball'd against the Emperor: That so he might be deprived of his See rather as a Criminal than Champion of the Faith: And for Encouragement of such a base Treachery he had the patriarchal Throne promised him upon the Deprivation of the old Patriarch, who soon perceived, that he harbour'd a *Judas* in his Family, who had sold him

him to the Emperor. But his inoffensive Behaviour, both in Words and Actions rendering it impossible to fasten any Accusation upon him with the least Appearance of Truth, *Leo* was forced to have Recourse to open Violence.

He therefore order'd the principal Nobility of *Constantinople* to be assembled in the great Hall of the Palace in the Beginning of *January* An. 730, where the Patriarch was likewise summon'd to appear, accompany'd by some Court-Bishops, who had already sacrificed their Conscience and Religion to worldly Views. The Emperor came himself in Ceremony attended by his Officers and Guards: And there without asking the Advice of the Assembly, or any other Formality, he caused a new Edict to be publish'd, whereby he abolish'd throughout the whole Extent of his Empire all Images of *Jesus Christ*, his blessed Mother, and the Saints and Angels, which he qualified with the Name of Idols, and forbid all his Subjects under Pain of Death to keep them either in their Churches, or publick Places, or private Houses. Then addressing himself to *St. Germain* ask'd him whether he was ready to set his Hand to this Edict, as many Persons of Worth, whose Example he ought to follow, and the Emperor himself were Going to do: But the holy Patriarch answer'd without Balancing, that it did not belong to Emperors to decide Matters of Religion, but to the Catholick Church assembled in a general Council. And that as for himself, he would rather die, than cast a Stain upon the Faith he had till then profess'd. Whereupon the Emperor without any other Form of Process deprived him by his own Authority of his patriarchal Dignity, which he bestow'd immediately

immediately upon the Traiter *Anastasius*, a fit Tool to do all the dirty Work of such a Prince.

St. *Germain* perceiving that Violence and Injustice prevail'd in that Assembly, protested generously against their Proceedings and the wicked Edict, and declared he consented heartily to be thrown into the Sea like another *Jonas*, and only pray'd God, that his being sacrificed might appease the Tempest. After which he stripp'd himself of his patriarchal Robe, which he left upon the Altar of his Church, and retired to a House of his own in the Country, from whence he was soon after forced away by the Emperor's Guards; who after having loaded him with a thousand Indignities, carried him into Banishment, where they strangled him soon after being near an hundred Years old. The Life and Actions of this Apostolical Prelate proclaim his Character much louder than Words can do; and he is honoured by the *Greek Church* as a Martyr on the 12th of *May*.

After this unjust and violent Proceeding the wicked *Anastasius* would needs be install'd with Ceremony in the patriarchal See. But he soon found with the utmost Hazard of his Life the Difference the People made between a Pastor infinitely beloved by his Flock, and a Wolf, whom they had in Execration. For those very Women, who had so courageously opposed the Emperor's Officers and Soldiers sent to pull down the Image of *Christ*, that stood upon the Palace Gate, being apprized of what had happen'd to St. *Germain*, and that the Apostate *Anastasius* was going to invade the Throne, transported with an excessive Zeal, without considering the Danger they expos'd themselves to, and the weakness of their Sex, ran tumultuously to the Church arm'd



arm'd with Stones, of which they discharg'd such a Shower upon the false Patriarch, that the People about him, who were also thrown at from all Sides, had no small Difficulty to bring him off, and give him an Opportunity to make his Escape, as he did half dead with Fear, to the Emperor's Palace, whom he fill'd with so much Rage by Aggravating the Women's Insolence, that he sent his Guards without Delay, who made a miserable Massacre of that unarm'd Multitude.

In the mean Time the Pope, to whom the Intruder *Anastasius* had according to Custom sent a synodical Letter to acquaint him with his Promotion, and demand his Communion, finding the Emperor not only persisting in his Heresy after so many repeated Admonitions, but that over and above he had deprived of his See the Person, who had stood up with so much Steadiness and Resolution in Defence of the Catholick Faith, and put in his Place a wicked Wretch, whom it had cost many Crimes to purchase the patriarchal See, sent without Delay a Monitory to that Intruder, by which he declared him suspended from all priestly Functions, and threaten'd him with Excommunication, unless he immediately abjured his Heresy; as to the Emperor he wrote to him more pressingly than ever exhorting him to renounce his Impiety. But *Leo* more harden'd than ever instead of listening to his wholesome Advice became more wicked and furious than before; and gave the finishing Stroke to his former Crimes by filling *Constantinople* with Sacrileges, Lamentations and Blood. For he order'd all the Paintings in Churches to be entirely effaced, and the Walls to be new whiten'd over, that no Marks of Painting should appear. Then he publish'd an Order, by which he obliged all the Inhabitants, especially



especially those who had the Care of Churches, to deliver up all their Images, and those deposited with them to his Officers to purge, as he call'd it, in a Moment the Town by setting Fire to them all at once.

This Order which caused an unspeakable Consternation among the Catholics; was executed with the utmost Rigour. Those that made any Resistance, were beaten in a cruel Manner. Some were massacred, and to strike Terror into others, some were beheaded publickly, and several had some Limb cut off, to terrify the very stoutest by the doleful Sight of those maim'd Wretches from opposing in Vain, what they could not hinder; so that these furious Instruments of the Emperor's merceless Impiety, having by these Barbarities put an End to all Opposition, made in the great Place of *Constantinople* a large Pile of all the Images of *Christ*, his Blessed Mother and Saints, and reduced them to Ashes in a Moment uttering a thousand Blasphemies, whilst the People fill'd the Air with Lamentations, and call'd aloud to Heaven for Vengeance.

The Pope having received Intelligence of what had been transacted at *Constantinople*, concluded the Emperor to be incorrigible, and that it was now necessary to guard the *West* from catching the Infection of the Poison, which had spread itself over all the *East*. He therefore call'd a Synod of the neighbouring Bishops, by which *Iconoclasm* was condemn'd and the Catholick Faith relating to Images confirm'd. The wicked *Anastasius* was excommunicated as an Heretick, and Usurper of the Patriarchal See. The Emperor's numberless detestable Crimes and invincible Obstinacy were laid before the Council, by whose Advice he was excommunicated as an Heretick,  
or

or rather as a noted and incorrigible Heresiarch. After which the Pope approving what he had till then endeavour'd to hinder, and the People had already done of their own Accord by withdrawing their Obedience, he forbad the *Romans* and other Cities of *Italy* to pay him any Tribute. But Reflecting that such a vigorous Proceeding might at long Run occasion the Ruin of *Italy*, if not powerfully supported, he put it under the Protection of *France* a warlike and flourishing Kingdom at that Time, which secured it against all the Attempts of *Leo*, and put it effectually out of the Reach of his furious Revenge.

I shall now give the Reader such an Instance of the Baseness of this vile Emperor's Temper, as the very Refuse of Jails would blush at. I mean, the Story of *St. John Damascene* so call'd from the City of *Damascus*, where he was born, A famous City at that Time belonging to *Hesiam* the *Saracen Calif* of *Syria*. His Father, though a Christian, was so highly valued by the *Calif* for his known Probity and Conduct, that he entrusted him with the chief Government of the City, and after his Death his Son *John*, who had inherited all the Virtues and Perfections of his Father, was in Reward of his own personal Merits taken by the *Calif* into his privy Council, made the principal Director of all his Affairs, and particularly the Government of *Damascus*.

'Twas about this Time that *Leo* was most intent upon Establishing his Heresy, and Persecuting the Catholics. But as this Saint was perfectly well versed in the Doctrines of the Catholick Church, and his Zeal was equal to his Knowledge, he wrote a great Number of learned Letters to his Friends to exhort them to a Steadiness in the Catholick Faith: And though he could

not

not write to all, his Letters pass'd from Hand to Hand, and wrought a wonderful Effect in Confirming some and Reclaiming others.

*Leo* not being able to brook, that a Man of so high a Reputation in the *East* should oppose him so openly, and attack him in the very Heart of the Empire, though he was not there in Person, had Recourse to the blackest Forgery, that ever enter'd into the Thoughts of the most abandon'd Villain. For having found Means to get some of his Letters, he put them into the Hands of one so exquisitely Skilful in counterfeiting Hands, that it was impossible to know the one from the other. Then he made his Artist write a Letter as from the Saint to *Leo*, wherein he exhorted him to march suddenly with his Army to *Damascus*, which he promised to deliver up into his Hands: Which Letter he sent immediately to the *Califf* with one of his own to inform him of the intended Treason. The *Califf* gave immediately into the Snare; and though the Saint after having seen the Letter made a solemn Declaration of his Innocence, and only begg'd Time to discover to him the foul Artifice of *Leo*, he order'd immediately his right Hand to be cut off, and nail'd to a Gibbet to be seen by the whole Town.

*Leo* was overjoy'd at the Success of his Forgery, but his Joy was but short-lived, and made soon after to turn to his Confusion by the omnipotent Hand of God, who to vindicate the Innocence of his faithful Servant wrought a Wonder, whereof the whole Town of *Damascus* were Eye-witnesses. For the Saint returning Home in the painful Condition caused by the Loss of his Hand, and judging towards the Evening, that the *Califf's* first Transport of Fury might be somewhat abated, sent to him to beg humbly of him,  
that



that he might have his Hand restored to him, which was easily granted; and then the Saint falling prostrate before an Image of the Blessed Virgin, which he had in his Oratory, and Applying the Hand to the Place, where it ought naturally to be, offer'd up to her a fervent Prayer to implore her powerful Intercession with her Son to have the Use of his Hand restored, which he always had employ'd and would always employ in Defence of their Honour attack'd in the sacrilegious Prophanation of their Images. Whilst he was thus pouring forth his Soul in Prayer, he fell insensibly into a gentle Slumber, in which the Blessed Virgin appearing to him assured him his Request was granted, as he effectually found it was upon his wakening, by Finding his Hand perfectly rejoin'd to his Wrist: Only there appear'd a small Circle about it marking the Place, where it had been cut off. The whole Town soon had the News of this stupendious Miracle, and the *Califf* being told of it, was resolved to be himself an Eye-witness of the Truth of it: As he was in Effect: Upon which acknowledging the Injustice of his hasty Sentence express'd his Detestation of the Emperor's infamous Forgery; and for Reparation of Honour offer'd to restore the Saint to all his former Dignities: But he refused modestly the Acceptance of them being resolved to spend the Remainder of his Days in Solitude; and thereupon having sold his Estate, and distributed the Money partly amongst the Poor and partly amongst his Relations he retired to the famous Monastery of *St. Sabas* in *Palestine*, where he compos'd those excellent Pieces relating to the Honour to be paid to Images against the *Iconoclasts*: Which together with his other Writings yet extant are an everlasting Testimony of the



the Truth of the Miracle I have related. For he could not write without a Hand; and I never heard it asserted, that he made Use of any other Hand than his own.

In the mean Time *Leo's* obdurate Heart was not at all mollified by the Fame of this celebrated Miracle; with which the *Saracens* themselves were sensibly touch'd, but became more furious upon the News of the Revolt of *Italy*; and whilst he was preparing a powerful Fleet to be revenged of the Pope and *Romans*, continued Persecuting most cruelly the Catholics, that were within the Reach of his Fury. Some of the most eminent Bishops were thrown into Dungeons, others sent into Banishment, where they suffer'd a lingering Martyrdom. He had however the Mortification to be reproach'd to his Face with his Impiety by some courageous Souls, who neither regarded his Edicts, nor fear'd his Cruelty. One of these was the generous Solitary *Theophilactus* esteem'd by the whole *East* for his Holiness, who had the Boldness to call him before a great Deal of Company a wicked Wretch, a Forerunner of *Antichrist* and a second *Judas*: For which he had his Body torn with Whips; and thus bath'd in his own Blood was thrown into a Prison; where *Leo* finding this courageous Saint despise all his Threats of a violent Death, unless he renounced Images, condemn'd him like others to undergo a lingering Martyrdom in Banishment.

But he durst not treat in the same Manner *John* Bishop of *Polibore* a small Town in *Phrygia*, who came like the other to reproach him to his Face. For here his Fear prevail'd over his Rage, because this holy Bishop was so famed throughout all the *East* for his Miracles, that he had the Surname

name of *Thaumaturgus* given him. So that the Emperor knowing that Miracles cost him nothing, and fearing least he should work one, which might prove fatal to him, judg'd it safest to personate the Philosopher, and appear insensible of his Reproaches.

This was the State of Religion at *Constantinople*, when the formidable Fleet prepared by *Leo* to invade *Italy* set Sail from thence under the Command of *Manes* the most experienced of all his Officers: Which having sail'd along the Coast of *Greece* and *Epirus* enter'd the *Adriatick* See, where they design'd to make a Descent in some of the Ports of the ancient *Calabria* then yet belonging to the Emperor. And here it was that God confounded at one Blow without the Help of human Hands the Pride and Wickedness of this Prince, whom he had resolved to deprive irrecoverably of the Empire of the *West*. For the Winds and Seas rose in such a furious Storm against this Fleet, which had the whole Strength of *Greece* on Board, that in the Space of a few Hours what with the Ships, that were swallow'd up by the Sea, and those that were dash'd to Pieces against the Coast, there scarce escaped a Ship to carry the News to *Constantinople*.

This terrible Blow, which seem'd to come immediately from the Hand of God, and ought therefore to have alarm'd the Emperor into a Sense of his Duty, was made Use of by him as an Occasion to gratify his Avarice by Burdening his Subjects with new Taxes under Pretence of Repairing the Losses he had sustain'd, and the Catholics of *Constantinople* were treated with more Inhumanity than ever: Nay with a Barbarity exceeding even that of the ancient Persecutors of Christianity. Among many others the famous

famous Solitary *Gregory the Limniote*, who had from his very Infancy to the Age of almost an Hundred practised all the most rigid Exercises of a monastick Life upon Mount *Olimpus* in *Asia*, fired with Zeal for the Catholick Faith, had quitted his Solitude to oppose the wicked *Leo*. That Tyrant not able to brook this generous christian Liberty, after having caused him to be tortured with all the Cruelty his Rage suggested without Regard to his great Age, and that eminent Holiness, which made him respected by all the World, he order'd both his Hands to be cut off, and his Head to be burnt with hot Plates of Iron, whilst that admirable superannuated Saint sung the Praises of God to thank him for his having judg'd him worthy to die for the Defence of his Faith.

○ This heroick Constancy, which was follow'd by many others with an invincible Courage threw *Leo* into a raging Despair. But nothing mortify'd him more sensibly than to see the Catholick Truth triumph even in his own Palace without daring to take his Revenge of it. For he had made an Alliance with the King of the *Avars*; and for the closer Cementing of it, he had married his Son *Copronymus* to the King's Daughter, upon Condition that she should be baptized. For as he knew on the one Hand that a Pagan Princess would never be acknowledg'd Empress, so he doubted not on the other, but that Care would be taken to get her so well instructed in his Heresy by the false Patriarch, that seeing her Father, Husband, and principal Men of the Court all zealous *Iconoclasts*, she would easily conform to their Religion. She was therefore baptized, and had the Name of *Irenè* given her by *Leo*, to signify that she was the Bond of Peace betwixt him and her



her Father. But what human Prudence had begun upon the Considerations of temporal Interest, was soon after rectified and perfected by the inward Operations of Grace, which, when God pleases, can of *Stones make Children of Abraham*. For this Princess, who had a great Soul, and penetrating Judgment, being soon convinced, that She ought not to be a Christian meerly for Reasons of State, and the politick Views of her Father, resolv'd to be thoroughly instructed in all the Mysteries of Christian Religion; and the divine Grace enlightening her Understanding, and working powerfully upon her Will by the same insensible Degrees as She advanced in the Reading and Understanding of holy Scriptures, which She got carefully explain'd to her, not only embraced Christianity with her whole Heart, but embraced it according to the pure Doctrine of the Catholick Church; so that She was so far from being an *Iconoclast*, that She opposed her Father's Heresy with all her Force, and always had it in Execration to the extreme Mortification of *Leo*, who had in vain done all he could to corrupt her Faith; but for Fear of Provoking the King her Father, who was at that Time a powerfull Prince, not daring to make her feel the Effects of his Resentment, was forced to connive at and bear with the Piety of the religious *Irenè*: Who continuing always steadfast in the Faith of the Church, triumph'd gloriously over the reigning Heresy, in the very Face of the Court, and Presence of both Emperor and Husband.

But this was but the Beginning of *Leo's* Discontents. For Almighty God, who seem'd resolv'd to punish this heresiarch Emperor even in this World, visited him with all the ordinary Scourges of his Justice, to wit, War, Plague, and Famine.



The whole eastern Empire was towards the End of his Reign laid wast by an universal Famine, which was follow'd by a Plague, destroying numberless Inhabitants both in the Cities and Country: and the *Califf* of *Damascus* abhorring the base Forgery of this Emperor in Reference to St. *John Damascene*, broke the Peace with him, and sent his two Sons *Maurvias* and *Soliman* against him, who made a dreadful Havock in the Provinces of *Asia*. But whereas neither Plague, War, nor Famine wrought any Effect upon the harden'd Heart of this Prince, God sent a fourth Scourge, which alone would have sufficed to Shake at least the most inflexible Obstinacy, had not the Force of a long Resistance of the divine Grace render'd him at length utterly insensible.

This fourth Scourge was a dreadful Earthquake which fill'd principally all *Thrace* and *Bitbunia* with Desolation and Ruine. It began at *Constantinople* on a *Wednesday* the 26th of *October* about eight in the Morning, and was so violent that in a few Hours it threw down several Churches, and a great Number of Houses, under the Ruins whereof a numberless Multitude of People were buried. It likewise threw down the Statues of Emperors, amongst which was that of the great *Theodosius* placed upon the Gate, where the seven Towers now are. The Walls of *Constantinople* on the Land-side fell down, and there was scarce a Town in all *Thrace*, where there were not several Breaches made by it's violent Shocks. The Towns of *Bitbunia* underwent the same Fate; Both *Prenete* and *Nicomedia* had a great Part of their Houses destroy'd, and the Desolation of *Nicea* was so great, that there was but one Church left standing.

How

How deplorable a Thing is a Man given up to a reprobate Sense! All the People plainly saw the Hand of an angry God arm'd against them with all the foremention'd Scourges to revenge the Outrages committed against the Images of *Christ* and his blessed Mother, which had been thrown down to the Ground, and reduced to Ashes. *Leo* alone, the principal Person concern'd, and who might have found the true Cause of these publick Disasters in his own Crimes, saw nothing of all this; but took once more the Advantage of these Calamities to Satisfy his Avarice by Burdening his People with a new Tax to repair the Ruins occasion'd by the Earthquake. But he enjoy'd not long the Profit of it. For he died soon after of a Dropsy and a bloody Flux: Two opposite Distempers suitable to his two principal Vices, Avarice and Cruelty, on the 25th of *June*. and in the 25th Year of his Reign during the horrible Earthquake, which still continued in *Thrace* and *Bithynia*.

This was the End of this Monster of a Man, call'd *Leo the Isaurian*: A Monster of Obstinacy, Avarice, and Cruelty. But, what is scarce credible, he left a greater Monster than himself behind him, according to the ominous Prediction of the holy Patriarch *St. Germain* when he defiled his baptismal Font: To wit, his Son *Copronymus*: Who not having any one of his Father's good Qualities, surpass'd him infinitely in all his bad ones.

## *Constantin Copronymus.*

**M**onsieur *Maimbourg* gives this Description of him. “ *Viz*: That he was a Prince of  
 “ about 22 Years old, when his Father died,  
 “ deform’d in his Person, and of a rustick, sour,  
 “ and savage Aspect, betraying the irregularities  
 “ of a brutal Soul, destitute of all Humanity.  
 “ That he was of a narrow Capacity, and Inclinations prone to all Sorts of Vices. For besides  
 “ his Father’s Heresy he maintain’d all the Blasphemies of *Photinus* and *Nestorius* against *Jesus Christ*, and his Blessed Mother. That he defiled himself from his very Youth with all Sort  
 “ of Lewdness, and gave into all the most execrable Practices of Art-magick by the Invocation of Devils, and Offering to them  
 “ Sacrifices, with the Blood whereof he annointed himself to conjure up Spirits; and as if he had  
 “ resolved to renounce human Nature, and divest himself of the Quality of a Man to assume  
 “ that of a Beast, he came to that Excess of Brutality without Example, that he often took  
 “ a Pleasure to cover himself over with Horse-Dung, and obliged all that made Court to  
 “ him to do the same: Which besides the infamous Surname of *Copronymus*, got him also  
 “ the Title of *Cabellimis*, by which he is known in History.

This is the Character Monsieur *Maimbourg* gives of *Constantin Copronymus*, whose first Action after his Father’s Death was the Publishing of an Edict, which not only forbid the keeping of the Images of Saints, but likewise their Invocation, and even their being honour’d with the Title of Saints. Nay he carried his Impiety still farther.

For



For he order'd by that furious Edict, that where-  
ever any of their Relicks should be found, they  
should be thrown on the Ground, and spit upon.

But he render'd himself chiefly remarkable in  
the Hatred he had conceived against the Blessed  
Virgin, whom he attack'd openly, though the  
imperial City, where she was honour'd with a  
singular Devotion, had by the great *Constantine*  
been put under her peculiar Protection. For he  
forbad any Holidays to be kept in Honour of  
her, or Recourse to be had to her Intercession,  
declaring that she had no Power either in Hea-  
ven or on Earth. One Day even in the Presence  
of the whole Court he took a Bag full of Gold,  
and ask'd what it might be thought Worth?  
Upon being answer'd, that it was most certainly  
worth a great Deal, he emptied it immediately,  
and shewing the empty Bag to the whole Compa-  
ny, ask'd them *whether they thought it worth any  
Thing then?* And all Answering, as he could not  
but foresee, that it was worth Nothing: *Well  
then* (said the wicked Wretch) *the Case is just the  
same with Mary, whom you stupidly honour with-  
out Sense or Judgment. As long as she had Jesus  
Christ in her Womb, she deserved to be esteem'd and  
honour'd more than other Women, but since his  
Birth, she has been reduced to the Condition of ordi-  
nary Women, over whom she has no Advantage.*

This was applauded by the Court Parasites as  
a high strain of Wit. However this execrable  
Impiety joyn'd with the scandalous Vices of this  
brutal Emperor render'd him so odious to his  
Subjects, that there was a Conspiracy form'd to  
deprive him of the Empire, which he dishonour'd  
by his infamous Life, and bestow it upon his  
Brother in Law *Artabafde*, who was a zealous  
Catholick. The Design was carried on for a long

Time with great Success, and *Artabafde* was effectually render'd Master of *Constantinople*. But the Inconstancy of Fortune soon after deprived him of it, and replaced *Copronymus* on the Throne. But what is here remarkable, as soon as *Artabafde* was Master of *Constantinople*, the Patriarch *Anastafius*, who had no Religion but his Interest, and by a Mistake believed that *Copronymus* had been kill'd in a Battle, was one of the first, that acknowledg'd *Artabafde* for Emperor, personated the zealous Catholick, and declaim'd furiously against *Copronymus*, of whom he told the People in a publick Harangue, that having a Crucifix in his Hand, he had spoke to him these Blasphemous Words, *Believe not Patriarch, that he who is the Son of Mary, and whom we call Christ, is the Son of God. He is no more than a Man like others, and his Mother call'd Mary brought him forth, as mine, who is also call'd Mary, brought me into the World.*

The Discovery of this Secret together with his hypocritical Temporizing cost him very dear not long after. For *Copronymus* had no sooner recover'd *Constantinople*, but he took a bloody Revenge of all that had sided with *Artabafde*. A great Number of the first Quality were massacred: But many more had their Eyes pluck'd out, or their Hands and Feet cut off. The whole Town was deliver'd up to be plunder'd by the foreign Troops he had in his Army, who committed the greatest Excesses of Cruelty and Barbarity upon Persons, that were utter Strangers to them: And whilst the Town was thus in the utmost Misery and Desolation, that merciless Emperor, to triumph as it were over the publick Calamity order'd solemn Shews and Rejoycings in the great Citole where all the People with their  
Hearts

Hearts oppress'd with Grief were obliged to put on a gay outside as a Mark of their real inward Joy.

'Twas here that *Anastasius* the state Weathercock in matters of Religion, who had again profess'd himself an *Iconoclast*, was after a most cruel Scourging, naked and bloody as he was, set on an Ass with his Face turn'd to the Tail led round the great Place to be insulted by the Populace. All which notwithstanding *Copronymus*, who despair'd of finding a Man equally wicked and proper for his Purpose, rais'd him again from the Ass to the patriarchal Throne, where he fully answer'd all the Ends of that wicked Emperor, who dissembled then for a Time to amuse the Pope hoping by that Means to re-establish his Authority in *Italy*. But finding that nothing was like to be gain'd that Way, he threw off the Mask soon after, and became a more violent Persecuter of the Church than ever. But he was punish'd for it in a terrible Manner by Almighty God, who visited him with a dreadful Plague, which beginning in the Extremities of *Calabria* and *Cicily*, and spreading itself over all *Epirus* and *Greece*, and the Islands of the *Egean* Sea, like a violent Combustion, which the farther it goes becomes still more violent, reach'd at length the imperial City, where for three Years together it caused an unspeakable Desolation; and it appear'd manifestly by extraordinary Signs, that it came immediately from the Hand of God, who sent his exterminating Angels to revenge the Sacrileges and Prophanations of the *Iconoclasts*. For the Cloaths of those who were to be struck with it, appear'd mark'd with small Crosses, some of an Olive, some of a Skyblue Colour, who all died of Inflammations, which like Fire consumed them



them in a few Days Time. In a Word, this furious Plague became so violent in the Summer of the third Year, that there remaining neither Place nor Persons living to bury the Dead, the Town, which in Effect was but a large burying Place fill'd with dead Carcasses, was entirely abandon'd.

But this terrible Scourge not touching the Emperor's Person, soften'd not his Heart, but on the contrary, his particular Prosperity about the same Time harden'd it much more. For he had about that Time a Son and Heir born, whom he call'd *Leo* from the Name of his Grandfather, and who was soon after crown'd Emperor by the Patriarch *Anastasius*. After which Renewing the War with the *Saracens* he gain'd great Advantages over them, and in Order to repeople *Constantinople* he transported thither the Inhabitants of the Cities of *Armenia*. who by their long Commerce with the *Saracens* were all become stanch *Iconoclasts*. Nay to complete the Repeopling of the imperial City, he dispeopled almost all the Towns of *Greece* and the Islands, whose principal Nobility he transported thither: So that in a short Time it appear'd to be in as flourishing a Condition as it was before the Plague.

Being puff'd up with these prosperous Successes, he caus'd particular Assemblies to be held in the principal Cities in Order to dispose the Peoples Minds insensibly to receive the Decrees of the pretended general Council he design'd to call at *Constantinople* for the Establishment of his Heresy. In Effect his Council was assembled there the Year after, in which there appear'd three hundred and thirty eight *Iconoclast* Bishops. A monstrous Thing if well consider'd, that in less than thirty Years Time such a Number of Bishops should apostatize

apostatize from their Faith! But as no Man becomes completely wicked on a sudden, we may suppose without Danger of rash Judgment, that there had been a general Corruption of Manners long before amongst them, in Punishment whereof Almighty God withdrew from them his assisting Graces, and abandon'd them to the Corruption of their Hearts. This is certain, that the first step to Apostacy is for the most Part a Coldness in Devotion, and Neglect of ordinary Duties, which makes Men by Degrees lose all Sense of Religion, and then the first violent Temptation of temporal Interest proves generally too hard for them.

But be that as it will, this sham-Council was first held in the Palace of *Hiera* beyond the *Bosphorus*, in which *Theodosius* the Bishop of *Ephesus* and *Pastillas* Bishop of *Perge* in *Pamphilia* presided, because the false Patriarch *Anastasius* died a few Days before of that horrible Distemper, which makes Men void their Excrements at the Mouth, so that neither the Pope by his Legates, nor any of the four *Greek* Patriarchs were present at it till towards the latter End. For then to give a Lustre to it from the sacredness of the Place, *Copronymus* himself conducted it with great Pomp to the famous Church of our blessed Lady of *Blaquernes*, which he had prepared beforehand suitably to the Work that was to be perform'd in it. For whereas that famous Church was adorn'd on both sides with Images of *Mosaick* Work curiously wrought, which therefore *Leo* himself had spared, he caused them all to be destroy'd, though they represented the Mysteries of our Saviour's Life, and then having got the Walls plaster'd anew, the Pictures of Landskips and all sorts of Birds were drawn upon them:

And

And to render his Impiety complete, he order'd all the Relicks of Martyrs, which were honour'd in that Church, to be either burnt or thrown into the Sea.

The Church being thus fitted for his Purpose, and the Bishops having all taken their Places, the Emperor mounted a Tribune, which was on the left side of the Altar without the Rails, and having there made a short Discourse to them upon the Point of Religion, which they were to reform, he made a certain Monk call'd *Constantine* come to him, and shewing him to the Assembly proclaim'd him Patriarch of *Constantinople*. This was a wicked Wretch, who having formerly been Bishop of a little Town in *Pamphilia*, had been driven out of it for the Scandals of his Life. But as he was extremely supple, and capable of the blackest Crimes, if they but contributed to promote his Fortune, he recommended himself so effectually to the Emperor, who valued none but such as were Slaves to his Passions, that he was convinced, that he could not chuse any one more proper to succeed the wicked *Anastasius*. He therefore declared him Patriarch without any other Ceremonies or Formalities; that it might at least be said, that there was one Patriarch in his Council, in which he presided after this.

But, as the Decrees, which were to pass, had been all prepared beforehand in the Palace of *Hiera*, they were soon dress'd up in the Form, in which they now appear in the 6th Session of the 2d Council of *Nicea*, where all the false Reasonings of this sham-Council, which assumes the Title of the 7th general Council are solidly confuted. However the Decrees against Images having pass'd without Contradiction, the Council was concluded with loud Acclamations of the Emperor's



Emperor's Praises, and Anathema's against the Advocates of Images, and principally the holy Patriarch St. *Germain*, and St. *John Damascene* as the most zealous Promoters of Idolatry.

A few Days after the Emperor resolving to make all the Advantage possible of his Sham-council, caused the People to be assembled in the imperial Place; whither he came in Ceremony accompany'd by the new Patriarch, and all the other Bishops. Here it was that the Decrees of his Council were publish'd, and the Anathema's against the abovesaid Saints renew'd. After which the Bishops having made the People hold up their Hands cry'd out all together, that the World was now purged of Idolatry; then bringing forth a Cross, the new Testament, and the Sacrament of *Christ's* Body and Blood, commanded the People to swear by those sacred Things, that from thence forward they would look upon all Images as Idols, and those who honour'd them as Idolaters, particularly the Monks, whom *Copronymus* hated mortally; because they were almost the only, that opposed openly the Impiety of the *Iconoclasts*.

But what is here extremely surprizing, these very *Iconoclasts*, who hated Images, revered the Cross; to which in this Occasion they pay'd so great an Honour, that they obliged the People to swear by it joyntly with the Holy Sacrament; not seeing that they gave a mortal Wound to their own Cause by so palpable a Contradiction; and that the same Reason, which obliged them to honour a Piece of Wood, Gold, or Silver on Account of the Relation it had to *Jesus Christ* crucify'd, obliged them much more to honour his Image, which represented his very Person immediately, as most certainly a Cross  
does

does not. But Truth alone can be always uniform and consistent with itself, whereas Contradictions are the natural Fruit of Lies and Errors.

But be this as it will, the Monks, as I have said, were the principal Objects of *Copronymus's* Hatred, and driven away where-ever they were like so many wild Beasts: So that great Numbers of these holy Religious, to screen themselves from the Fury of his Persecution fled for Sanctuary to *Rome*, where they had Monasteries given them, and the Liberty of performing the divine Office according to the Practice of the oriental Church. There were however two eminent Solitaries, on whom this cruel Tyrant had the Pleasure to discharge his whole Fury. The first of these was one *Andrew*, surnamed the *Calybite*, because he had pass'd his whole Life in a poor solitary Hut in the very Heart of a hideous Desert, which he quitted during this cruel Persecution to encourage by his Exhortations the Catholicks of *Constantinople*, where he was also lodg'd in a little Hut; whence after he had strengthen'd himself by Prayer in the Night, he came forth in the Morning, and passing from Street to Street and from House to House, he every where instructed and exhorted the People. One Day, even whilst the Emperor was causing some holy Martyrs to be tormented in his Presence, he had the Courage to break through the Press, and force his Way through the Guards to the Emperor's Seat, and there reproach him with his Wickedness and Cruelty in Terms, which shew'd that his Heart was above the Terrors of Torments and Death.

In Effect, the Emperor not able to bear this generous Boldness contented himself however at first to give him up to the Discretion of his Guards, who having thrown him down, trampled upon him,

him, and abused and beat him without Mercy in the Presence of the Emperor, who thinking to find him then more tractable took him out of the Hands of his Guards. But seeing that with all his Efforts of Promises, Threats, or even Torments, which he caused frequently to be repeated, this admirable Solitary spoke always with greater Vehemence and Freedom, than before in Defence of the Catholick Faith, and inveigh'd with greater Force against his Heresy, he order'd him to be torn with Whips so inhumanly, that he died upon the Spot with the Loss of Blood and Violence of the Pain.

But the Treatment of another famous Solitary has something in it so barbarous and malicious as is without Example. This admirable Servant of God was the famous *St. Stephen the Younger*; who had lead a most holy Life for many Years in *Bitynia* upon the Mountain of *St. Auxence*; at the Bottom whereof he had built two large Monasteries, the one for Men, and the other for Women. *Copronymus*, who desired passionately to draw a Person of so high a Reputation into his Interest, sent to him the Patrice *Callistus* the most eloquent and crafty Man of his Court, but at the same Time the most malicious, and most slavishly devoted to all the Passions of his Master. This Man did all he could, but in vain, to induce the Saint to a Compliance. Wherefore to satisfy the Emperor some other Way, having promised at least to blast his Reputation, if he could not overcome his Constancy, he suborn'd false Witnesses, and amongst others one of the Saints own Disciples, who was the Servant of a Widow of Quality, call'd *Anne*, a Religious in one of his Monasteries, who by his pious Exhortations had retired thither to spend the Rest of her Days in Solitude.



Solitude. These false Witnesses deposed, that this Lady having been debauch'd by the Hypocrite *Stephen*, who cover'd his Crimes with an outward Appearance of Holiness, had embraced that State of Life for no other End than to have an uncontrollable Liberty to gratify his brutal Passion. But the invincible Constancy of that chaste and generous Lady in vindicating the Saint's and her own Innocence even on the Rack, and amidst Torments, by the Violence whereof she died, was a Testimony far outweighing that of their perjured Accusers; and Almighty God render'd it soon after more conspicuous by the extraordinary Judgment, which beset the wicked Servant, that had falsely accused her Mistress. For being brought to Bed of two Twins, whom she had by the Husband, that had been given her as a Reward of her Perjury; the Infants were seized in an Instant with a Sort of Rage, as if they had been possess'd by some Devil, and fasten'd upon both her Breasts with that extreme Fury, that no Force could make them quit their Hold; but they were torn off from her Breasts in such a violent Manner, that both they and their Mother died in the Operation.

After which, as the Saint had received into his Monastery one of the Court, whom the Emperor had got by a base Artifice to demand the Habit, this Prince who by an Edict had forbid the receiving of any Novices, made this a Pretence to be revenged of St. *Stephen* and his Monks, whom he drove all out of their Monastery, and having set Fire to it, he caused the Saint to be removed to *Chrysapolis*, where he defended with an extraordinary Force the Honour to be pay'd to Images, in a Conference he had there with the chief Bishops of the Syn-council of Constantinople,

*Constantinople*, the Nullity whereof he demonstrated from all the Heads, that can render it evident: After which he was banish'd to the Isle of *Pro-pontis*. But the Emperor being inform'd that all the Monks of the Mountain of *St. Auxence* had follow'd him thither, and that like another *Stylites* he stood there upon a Pillar, and work'd numberless Miracles by means of the Images of *Jesus Christ* and his Blessed Mother, he order'd him to be brought up to *Constantinople*, where in the Presence of the Emperor and the whole Court he did a memorable Thing to convince the *Ico-noclasts* in a sensible Manner of their Impiety. For perceiying that the Emperor, who would needs act the Divine, understood nothing of the Force of his Answers, he took a Piece of Silver, which had the Emperor's Head stamp'd upon it, and shewing it to the Company, he ask'd them, Whether if any one should trample or spit upon it, it would not be look'd upon as an Affront to the Emperor, that would deserve to be severely punish'd? They all answer'd that it would. Well then, said he to the Emperor, you judge it to be a Crime to shew a Disrespect to your Image engraven on a Piece of Silver, because it reflects upon your Person, which is represented by it, and yet you do not esteem it one to break, trample upon, throw into the Fire, and dishonour a thousand Ways the Image of the Saviour of the World, though we honour no more the Matter upon which it is engraven, than the Gold or Silver, which has your Image upon it; but all the Honour we pay to it terminates wholly in *Jesus Christ*, who is represented by it. Then in the Transport of his Zeal, to be admired rather than imitated, he threw the Piece of Silver on the Ground and trampled upon it to render

render the *Iconoclasts* sensible, that if according to their Principles it was no Outrage to *Jesus Christ* to abuse his Image, the same might be done without Offence to that of the Emperor. But Prejudice and Passion not suffering those, who were present to relish such just Reasoning, they fell foul upon him, and were going to throw him immediately into the Sea, had not the Emperor, who reserved him for a longer and more cruel Martyrdom, order'd him to be loaden with Irons, and thrown into the common Jail, where there were already three hundred and forty two Monks bearing the glorious Marks of their generous Confessions in the Wounds they had received for the Defence of their Faith.

In fine, *Copronymus* not able to bear, that this Saint should triumph over him even in his Prison, which he had converted into a kind of Monastery, where the Praises of God were sung Day and Night, gave him up to the Discretion of his Soldiers, who to please their Master, dragg'd his Body with such Barbarity through the Streets of *Constantinople*, that it was all torn to Pieces, and then thrown into the *Pelagium*, where the Bodies of condemn'd Malefactors were usually thrown and left unburied, so call'd from the Ruins of a Church formerly dedicated to the Martyr St. *Pelagius*, which *Copronymus* had demolish'd, and converted to that prophane and infamous Use.

The Hatred he bore to the Monks was such, that one Day having order'd publick Shews in the great Place before the Palace, he caused a Monk's Habit to be brought thither and exposed to the Laughter of the Spectators by the Comedians, who made a thousand ridiculous Jest's upon it. After which all such Monks as could be found conceal'd in their Monasteries were compell'd



pell'd to come to thither, and walk several Times round the Place, each of them leading a publick Prostitute by the Hand, and exposed to the Insolence of the Populace, who, to please the Emperor delighted with that brutal Diversion spit in their Faces, and utter'd a thousand Obscenities mix'd with the most injurious Reflections upon their State of Life. But what was the very Height of Barbarity, he commanded to be brought thither about twenty of the most considerable Persons of the Court, whom his Emissaries suborn'd by himself for that Purpose had accused of a Conspiracy against him, though their only real Crime was their extraordinary Merit, and eminent Qualifications both of Mind and Body, which that Prince, the profess'd Enemy of all Virtue, could not bear: But above all because they were zealous Catholicks, and had even publickly extoll'd the heroick Constancy and Courage of the holy Solitary *Stephen*, whom they had often visited in Prison. These therefore he commanded to be insulted in the most outrageous Manner by the Populace, whilst they cross'd the great Place loaden with Irons. After which he condemn'd some of them to lose their Heads, others their Eyes, and others again to be banish'd to the most hideous Places; whither over and above he sent his Executioners from Time to Time with Orders to give each of them a hundred Lashes to be laid on with a leathern Thong.

In a Word, there is no Sort of Cruelty, which he did not put in Practice against Bishops, Priests, Monks, and Persons of all States and Conditions, who refused to submit blindly to his Will. For being not yet satisfied with what his Sham-council had decided against Images, he assumed an Authority derogatory to it's Decisions in Reference

rence to other Articles, to forbid under Pain of Banishment besides corporal Punishments the Invocation of the blessed Virgin and the Saints, whose Relicks he order'd to be search'd for every where in order to abolish the very Remembrance of them. He even order'd to be thrown into the Sea the Shrine of the illustrious Martyr St. *Euphemia* whose Body, which is honour'd in the great Church of *Calcedon*, distils a sort of Balsam, as is visible to all the World, which the Faithful gather with great Devotion, and keep in all the *East* as a most valuable Treasure. But the Goodness of God, who had bestow'd it upon his People, was more powerful in the Preservation than the Emperor's Malice in the Destruction of it. For the Winds and Seas, which obey their Creator, brought it according to the Disposition of Providence to the Island of *Lemnos*, where the Faithful, who took it up, kept it conceal'd, till *Constantin* and *Irenè* order'd it to be brought back to *Calcedon*, after having rebell'd the Church, which *Copronymus* had order'd to be fill'd with Dung.

In the mean Time this wicked Prince after so many horrible Effects of his barbarous Cruelty, thought he had not done enough, unless he also took Precautions against the Time to come, so as to make sure of every Body, and render his Wickedness, if possible, everlasting. For this End he obliged all his Subjects to swear publicly before a Magistrate, that they would never pay any Honour to the Images of *Jesus Christ*, or his blessed Mother, much less to those of the Saints: which encreased in a very short Time the Number of Martyrs by the Deaths of numberless Persons of all Conditions, even Soldiers, who refused to take that Oath, or were accused of  
having

having Images by them. He did still more; for one Day when the great Church was full of People, he order'd his Patriarch *Constantin* to go up to the Pulpit, and there swear by the sacred Wood of the Cross, that he never would be a Worshipper of Images. One would think there was no great Occasion to demand this Oath of a Person, who had his whole Dependence on the Emperor's Favour, and was entirely devoted to his Will. But he had two Reasons to do it: First, because he was extremely mortified to see, that the three ancient Patriarchs of *Alexandria*, *Antioch*, and *Jerusalem* were declared Enemies to *Iconoclasm*, and therefore thought it expedient to have it publish'd in this pompous Manner, that the Patriarch of *Constantinople* was at least on his Side.

But he had another Reason, which he took more to Heart, viz: Because the Patriarch *Constantin*, as wicked a Man as he was, had render'd himself suspected to him by Opposing an execrable Design, which he had ventured to propose to him. For he imagined that this ambitious Monk, who had sold his Soul and Religion to him for a Bishoprick, would refuse him nothing. And therefore, as he was one Day with him alone, he spoke thus to him, *What Harm would it be, Patriarch, if we should say no more, that Mary is the Mother of God, but only the Mother of Christ?* For this unhappy Prince, who in his Heart was what the *Socinians* are now, and believed not the Divinity of *Jesus Christ*, design'd to establish by insensible Degrees that impious Doctrine. However the Patriarch was startled at it, and answer'd, *how can you entertain, Sir, such a Thought in your Mind? Don't you reflect how odious the Name of Nestorius is even now to the whole*



*Church for maintaining that Doctrine?* The Emperor pieck'd to the Heart for having made this bold Step without Success, conceal'd his Resentment, and answer'd him coldly, *why don't you see, Sir, that I put the Question to you only for my own Instruction? Say no more of it then, and take Care you never speak of it to any one whatsoever.* But nothing is more dangerous than to be let into the Secret of a wicked Prince, who can when he pleases rid his Hands of a Witness, who refuses to become an Accomplice of a Crime, which he may discover some Time or other. After that the Emperor had always a Jealousy of his Patriarch, and fearing least he might one Day differ also from him in the Article of Images, thought it necessary to tie him down by that Oath, which he obliged him to take in such a solemn Manner. However he fell soon after into Disgrace by the Accusation of false Witnesses suborn'd by the Emperor himself, who was resolved not to let a Man live, of whom he stood in Awe, and who therefore after having first suffer'd all Sorts of Indignities, had his Head cut off soon after.

Whilst *Constantinople* was thus wallowing in Blood, the Emperor sent a solemn Embassy to *Pepin* King of *France* with a double Commission; first, to demand King *Pepin's* Daughter for his Son *Leo*, which proved unsuccessful, and 2dly, to have a publick Conference with the Bishops of *France* upon the Article of Images. His Embassadors were six of the chief Nobility, with whom there came several of his most learned *Iconoclast* Bishops and Doctors, who were to enter the List against the Catholick Prelates.

This Conference, which in Reality was a Synod, was held with all Solemnity possible at *Gentilly* a royal

royal Country Seat within a small League of *Paris*. The greatest Part of the *French* Bishops were present at it, and the Pope, whose supreme Authority was then acknowledg'd by the *Eastern* as well as *Western* Church presided at it by his Legates, who were six in Number. The six imperial Embassadors were also present at it with their Bishops; and the King himself to give a greater Lustre and Authority to it, and see good Order observed was present in Person attended by the chief Nobility. The Subject of Images was there discuss'd with great Exactness: And though, as Monsieur *Maimbourg* observes, some modern Historians pretend that the Question was left undecided (besides that this is a Thing without Example, there being no Instance of a Council expressly call'd for the Determination of any disputed doctrinal Point, which broke up without Concluding any Thing) it appears plainly from two unquestionable Facts, that the Decision was in Favour of the Catholick Doctrine, *first*, Because the King himself, who was present at the Synod, as has been said, charg'd the Embassadors of the Emperor to exhort him in his Name to renounce his Error, and embrace from thenceforward the Catholick Faith: And *2dly*, Because twelve of those very Bishops, who had been at the Synod of *Gentilly* were sent two Years after as Representatives of the *Gallican* Church to a Council held at *Rome*, where they appear'd the most zealous Advocates for holy Images, and anathematized the Sham-council of *Constantinople*, which without all Dispute they did with a Regard to what had been before decided at *Gentilly*.

It was not however the only Vexation *Copronymus* had to see his solemn Embassy come off with Dishonour. For it was about the very same Time

that the three *Eastern* Patriarchs of *Alexandria*, *Antioch*, and *Jerusalem* assembled a Council at *Jerusalem*, where after having condemn'd the Heresy of the *Iconoclasts*, they sent a most excellent Synodocal Letter to the Pope, wherein they declared their Faith concerning Images to be entirely conformable to that of the *Western* Church.

As to the Council held at *Rome*, as soon as the abovemention'd twelve *French* Bishops arrived there with those of *Italy*, it was assembled in the great *Lateran* Church, where the Question concerning Images was taken under Examination. The Pope, who was a very learned Man, after having produced a great many Testimonies both of Scriptures and Fathers to prove, that nothing but the keeping or Worshipping *Idols* was forbid by the second Commandment, made it appear from an uninterrupted Tradition, which he traced up to the very Apostles, that honouring the Images of *Christ* and his Saints had been practised in all Ages since the first Establishment of Christianity. Then the Synodical Letter of the three *Eastern* Patriarchs was read, which contain'd in Substance the same Arguments, which the Pope, had urged. *Sergius* Archbishop of *Ravenna* among other Passages taken from the Fathers laid a particular Stress upon that of *St. Ambrose Epist.* 33. Where he relates, that when the two holy Martyrs *Gervasius* and *Protasius* appear'd to him the third Time, he saw with them a venerable Man, whom he took for *St. Paul* from the perfect Resemblance he had of the Pictures he had seen of that Saint: Which he insisted upon as a Proof that the Exposing of the Images and Pictures of Saints in Churches was a Practice of great Antiquity, as does likewise *St. John Damascene*.  
Besides



Besides many others, who quoted the Testimonies of Fathers, *Herulphus* who was one of the twelve *French* Bishops, produced St. *Gregory's* Letter to *Secundinus*, wherein having acquainted him that he sent him the Pictures of *Jesus Christ*, his blessed Mother, and the Apostles St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, he tells him, that we do not prostrate ourselves before the Picture of our Saviour as before a Divinity, but that by that Action we adore him, who is represented by it.

In a Word the Honour paid to Images thus understood was so solidly establish'd from numberless Testimonies of Fathers produced by the *French* Bishops, that the Sham-council of *Constantinople*, and all the Advocates of *Iconoclasm* were anathematized. After which the Pope and all the Fathers of the Council follow'd by the People the Senate and Clergy went barefooted in a solemn Procession to St. *Peter's* Church, where after that the Secretary *Leontius* had read with a loud Voice the Decrees and Canons of the Council, the Bishops of the *white Forest*, *Porto*, *Albano* and *Tivoli* pronounced Sentence of Excommunication against all such as should dare to infringe, or derogate from the Decrees of the Council.

Things being thus happily concluded, the Pope wrote an excellent Letter to the Emperor to inform him of the perfect Harmony there was between the Bishops of *Italy* and *France* upon the Subject of Images, and to exhort him in the most pressing Manner to reunite himself to the Catholick Church. But this unhappy Prince, who resented highly the bad Success of the Negotiations of his Embassadors in *France*, became still more enraged against the Catholicks, whom he persecuted with the utmost Cruelty. But he discharged his Fury principally upon Monks and Solitaries, whom he

hated mortally, because they always opposed him with an invincible Courage. He caused the venerable *Peter*, who was become an Imitator of the famous *Daniel* and *Simeon Stylites* to be thrown down from his Pillar; and being inform'd that he was not dead of his Fall, he order'd him to be dragg'd by a Rope tied to his Feet through all the Streets of *Constantinople*, till being quite torn to Pieces, his Body was thrown into the *Pelagium*. Great Numbers were put to several cruel Deaths by the faithful Executioners of his barbarous Orders, whom he took Care to reward for this agreeable Piece of Service. For after having demolish'd a great Number of Monasteries both of Men and Women, he left standing some of the principal ones, which he abandon'd to the Discretion of those barbarous Wretches, who committed an infinite Number of Sacrileges to satisfy their Avarice.

But among all the Monks, who were the Objects of his Hatred, he had an Eye particularly on those, who had formerly been the Companions and Witnesses of his abominable Debaucheries, and had retired to Monasteries to expiate the Disorders of their Lives past by worthy Fruits of Penance. For he gave no Quarter to any one of these, nor even to their Confessors, whom he caused all to be massacred, to deliver himself from the troublesome Thought that his Crimes were known by any but such as continued to be Accomplices with him. They were surely of the very blackest Die, when *Copronymus* was ashamed to have them known but by Persons as wicked as himself. He continued however in the Practice of them, and came to that Degree of Impiety, that if any of his Accomplices should happen by Chance and without Reflection to let drop some  
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pious Word, whereof they had formerly contracted a Habit, they were immediately disgraced, and some even put to Death as for some hainous Crime. But because he could not be himself every where to exercise his Cruelty as at *Constantinople*, he had placed choice Men for Governors in the Provinces, whose Barbarity he was secure of, and who he knew would, to please him, even go beyond his Orders, as many of them did in Effect; for which they were caress'd and rewarded.

'Twas about this Time that he married his Son *Leo* to a noble Lady of *Athens*, call'd *Irenè*, whose Wit and Beauty without any Advantage of Fortune were the only Recommendations, that raised her to that high Dignity. She was most certainly a Catholick in her Heart. But as self-love makes Persons easily believe any Thing, that flatters their Passions, and as she was not too well grounded in the Principles of solid Christian Virtue, as will appear hereafter from her Conduct, she persuaded herself that she might dissemble her Religion for a Time, to become capable of serving the Church to a greater Advantage by a more seasonable Declaration of it afterwards. So that she not only profess'd herself an *Iconoclast*, but swore by all that's sacred, that she always would be so.

The Marriage was celebrated with great Pomp and Rejoycings: But they were soon after turn'd into Blood and Tears by the Loss of several confideral Battels against the *Saracens* and *Bulgarians*, and the utter Destruction of a powerful Fleet, which the Emperor had sent to be revenged of them. These Misfortunes threw him into a most violent Passion, which together with an over earnest Application to the Preparations for a War against  
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the ensuing Year, heated his Blood so, that he found himself seiz'd on a sudden with a Distemper, which threw him into a burning Fever attended with such fiery Inflammations on his Legs and Thighs, that he cry'd out one Day, that he was already burning in the Flames of Hell in Punishment of his having blasphemed against the Mother of God. But coming soon after to a more calm Temper, he desired those that were about him and even commanded them to let all the World know, that it was his last Will, that without having any Regard to what he had acted against the Blessed Virgin, she should from thence forward be honour'd throughout the whole Empire as the Mother of God. Then praying for the People, the Senate, his Son *Leo*, and the Preservation of the Church of *Constantinople*, he gave up the Ghost on the 14th of *September*, *An. 775*. God only knows whether his Repentance was sincere. But it looks very much like that of the wicked *Antiochus*, of whom we are assured by the Word of God itself, that he pray'd God, of whom he was not to obtain Mercy.

Thus far is certain, that of all Christian Princes we read of in History he was the most wicked and brutal. For he render'd himself guilty of all Sorts of Crimes and Abominations without ever giving the least Mark of any Virtue to counter-balance them. And though we be not allow'd to dive into the Depth either of God's Judgments or Mercies, which are unsearchable, yet leaving to God what is conceal'd from us, we may judge from what we know for certain, that the Death of this Prince, who but a few Moments before cry'd out that he was burning in the Flames of Hell, appears to be as frightful, as his Life had been abominable. And 'tis no Wonder that his  
Memory

Memory has ever been held in Execration by all Mankind, and that the *Greeks* themselves speak always of him as of a Monster or wild Beast, an *Antichrist* and Devil incarnate. Nay as soon as the Heresy of *Icanoclasts* was entirely abolish'd by the Empress *Theodora*, and her Son *Michael*, this Emperor caused his Body, which was buried in the Church of the Apostles, to be taken up, and burnt publickly in the great Place of *Constantinople*.

## Leo the Son of Copronymus.

**A**FTER the Death of *Copronymus* his Son *Leo*, who was twenty six Years old took at first a very different Course from that of his Father. For, though he was a stanch *Icanoclast*, as we shall see immediately, he disssembled at first upon publick Motives. For, besides that he forbore persecuting the Catholicks, he affected to shew a singular Devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and permitted those Religious, whom his Father had banish'd, or had hid themselves in the Desert, to return back to their Monasteries. He even express'd a particular Esteem and Affection for them, and chose the most celebrated amongst them to fill the vacant metropolitan Sees. But this Calm was soon after follow'd by a violent Storm on this Ocession. Though he had not suffer'd the Catholicks to be persecuted, whilst he continued in his Dissimulation, he had not however permitted the Images, his Father had pull'd down, to be re-establish'd: Because he was effectually imbued with his Father's Heresy, whose Memory he would not condemn. So that the *Icanoclasts*, who had the Emperor himself at the Head  
of

of them, were always the prevailing Party; and the Empress though a Catholick in her Heart, dissembled on her Side. But this Princess having intrusted those with her Secret whom she knew to be the most zealous Catholicks at Court, had been presented by them with some Images, before which she perform'd her private Devotions in her own Appartment.

Now it happen'd, that one Day the Emperor, who had been inform'd of the whole Matter by some one, who had betray'd her, enter'd suddenly into her Chamber to surprize her, but finding nothing at first he search'd every where, even amongst her Bedcloaths, and found at last two Images in her Pillow, probably one of *Jesus Christ*, the other of the Blessed *Virgin*; upon which he fell into a violent Passion, and would absolutely know, who had brought those Idols, as he call'd them, thither. But all denying that they knew any Thing of the Matter, he made such a diligent Enquiry into it, that he found they were some of the principal Officers of the Court, who were all treated with the utmost Barbarity. As to the Empress, she always deny'd positively, that she had had any Hand in the Business, or that she knew what those Images were, or who had hid them in her Pillow. She added that perhaps it had been done to draw her into a Snare, and give the Emperor a bad Opinion of her. But he was not to be imposed upon by this Artifice, because he had been too exactly inform'd of every Circumstance of the whole Matter. He therefore fell into a much more violent Passion, and without Regard to the Bounds even of common Decency he treated her with the most brutal Language, told her she was a Woman of no Consequence and that she had neither Honour nor Religion,

ligion, since she had violated the solemn Oath sworn to the late Emperor by every Thing that is sacred, that she would always abhor Images. In a Word, he carry'd his Passion to such an extravagant Height, that as she came up to him to sooth him with soft Words and Careffes, he push'd her violently away from him, and never saw her after that Time.

But this kind of Divorce, as I may call it, did not last long: Because Almighty God, who design'd to prolong the Peace, which the Church had enjoy'd after the Death of *Copronymus*, took his Son soon after out of the World by a Sort of Death not much unlike to that of his Father. This Emperor had an excessive Passion for fine Jewels; in so much, that as soon as he saw one that pleased him, he could not rest till he had it, cost what it would. Now there was in the Church of *St. Sophia* among the other valuable Treasures a Crown of Gold adorn'd with the finest Jewels that could be seen, which the Emperor *Heraclius* had presented to that Church. *Leo*, who was charm'd with the Beauty of the Jewels, was stark mad to get them into his own Hands. However because they had formerly been an Offering solemnly made to God, the Fear of incurring the Guilt of a most grievous Sacrilege was some Check upon him, and made him somewhat irresolute upon the Matter. But the Violence of his Desire soon got the Master of his Fear, and without giving himself much Uneasiness about the Hainousness of the Crime it would cost him, he had the Crown brought away to him. As soon as he had got it into his Hands, he was so fond of it, that he resolved to appear soon after with it upon his Head in a solemn Procession he was to walk in. But it cost him very dear. For being come back

to



to his Palace, in the very Moment that he put off the fatal Crown, he felt a violent Pain in his Head, and round his Temples and Forehead, where-ever the Crown had touch'd it, there broke out Sores of such a fiery Nature, as with the Violence of the Pain threw him into a burning Fever, whereof he died in a few Days after.

### *Constantin and Irene.*

**T**HIS surprizing Death, which was a visible Judgment, restored immediately Peace to the Church, whereof the Wickedness of Emperors had depriv'd her. The young *Constantin* had been associated to the Empire by his Father, and the crafty *Irene* had managed the Nobility so artfully in Favour of herself, that not long after the Emperor's Death they rais'd her to the same high Dignity; so that this Princess by a sudden Turn of Fortune pass'd in an Instant from a sort of Banishment and State of Disgrace to the highest Pitch of sovereign Authority, and became absolute Mistress of the Empire during her Son's Minority, who was but ten Years old.

'Tis very certain that this Empress was a sincere Catholick in her Heart, though her Politicks were not always directed by the Principles of Christianity, but often by her predominant Passion, which was an immoderate Ambition of Reigning, even to the Prejudice of her own Son, when he came to be of Age. But be that as it will, she form'd a Design from the very first of abolishing *Iconoclasm*, and therefore took all the Measures necessary to establish her own Authority in such a Manner as to be in a Condition to render any Opposition she should meet with ineffectual.

However,

However, not to exasperate the *Iconoclasts*, by carrying Things with too high a Hand, and obliging them to pass all at once from one Extreme to another, she contented herself at first with giving every Body a free Liberty of Conscience to believe and practise what they pleased in Reference to Images, and only revoking the Edicts, which *Copronymus* had publish'd against them, without publishing any express Orders for their Re-establishment. This had a wonderful Effect in a City where the greatest Part had turn'd *Iconoclasts*, either out of Fear or Compliance even contrary to that strong Inclination, with which the People of *Constantinople* had been brought up to honour God in his Saints, particularly the Blessed Virgin, whom they regarded as the Protectress of their City. So that they were no sooner deliver'd from the Fear of Persecution, but they return'd to their former Devotion with greater Zeal and Fervour than before, and there were scarce any *Iconoclasts* left, but amongst the Officers and Soldiers, and those wretched Bishops, who had sacrificed their Conscience and Religion to purchase the Emperor's Favour, and did all they could to maintain their Heresy, till the generous Repentance of the Patriarch *Paul* gave the Empress a fair Opportunity of Ruining it entirely without risking any Thing.

This Patriarch, who was a Man of great Virtue, and not only singularly beloved by the People for his extraordinary Charity to the Poor, but highly esteem'd by the Empress and the whole Court for his great Prudence, finding himself indisposed, was touch'd with so sensible a Repentance of the Fault he had committed in having been too favourable to the *Iconoclasts* under the former Emperor, that without communicating his

his Design to any one he quitted the patriarchal See in order to become a Religious in the Monastery at *Constantinople*. The Empress surprized at this Action hasten'd thither together with the Emperor to dissuade a Person, who was like to be so useful to her from persisting in so strange a Resolution. But the Patriarch bursting out into Tears, and interrupting her cry'd out with a lamentable Voice, *Ab Madam, would to God I had never been so unhappy as to have accepted of the Patriarchship of a Church, which was enslaved under the Tyranny of heretical Emperors, and anathematized by the other patriarchal orthodox Churches, which cut her off from their Communion. If Death had surprized me in that unhappy Dignity, my Soul would have been lost for ever.*

*Irenè*, who was sensible that she might make great Advantage of this extraordinary Repentance of so great a Man, retired after having said some comfortable Things to him. Then having call'd together some of the chief *Iconoclast* Nobles and Senators, pretended to stand in need of their Assistance in this Occasion, and desired them to go to the Patriarch, and endeavour to prevail upon him to return to his Church. As soon as the Saint saw them come towards him, he told them as the Empress had foreseen, that there was no Hopes of Salvation for them, unless they renounced their Heresy. *But why then*, said they, *did you at your Consecration declare to the Emperor Leo, that you renounced the Worship of Images.* Alas, said the Patriarch, *that very Thing is the only Cause of my Tears. 'Tis that which obliges me to have Recourse to God by a solid and sincere Repentance, in order to prevail upon his Mercy not to punish me hereafter in his Wrath, as one that has betray'd his Trust, and for Fear of displeasing Men*  
has



has not been afraid to incur the just Indignation of God by Concealing the Truth from the Flock committed to his Charge. Upon which this admirable Penitent redoubled his Sighs and Tears, and his Repentance became so feeling and piercing, that his Heart broke with Grief, and he breath'd forth his penitent Soul in the Presence of them all.

This Testimony of the Truth of the Catholick Faith confirm'd in such an extraordinary Manner by a Patriarch so generally esteem'd and beloved made such an Impression even upon the noble Men of the Court, who could not overcome the Astonishment they were under at such a surprizing Death, that the Empress judg'd she might then safely undertake the Re-establishment of the ancient publick Worship. In View whereof she made immediately a second Step somewhat bolder than the first in Publishing an Edict, by which what was before but tolerated was then authorized in Catholicks to maintain in their Sermons and publick Conferences the Honour due to Images, and refute the Heresy of *Iconoclasts*. After which this Princess, who knew perfectly well how to take in all Occasions just Measures to compass the End, she had in View, caused a general Assembly of all the Orders of the City to meet in the great Hall of the Palace, whither she came in Ceremony with the Emperor attended by the chief Nobility: And when every one had taken his Place, and were expecting with a respectful Silence to hear what Business should be laid before them, the Empress who was naturally eloquent, and a perfect Mistress of the *Greek* Tongue, made a short Speech, wherein having very pathetically set forth the great Loss they had in the Death of the late excellent Patriarch, she made them sensible of the Necessity there was of giving him a Successor



of equal Merit and Capacity to bear the Weight of a Charge of that Importance and Difficulty, especially at a Time, when they were at Variance among themselves about Matters of Religion. She added, *that the Emperor regarding this as a Matter of the utmost Importance, had assembled them to be assisted in it by their Advice. That there was indeed a Person at Court, against whom no Exception could be made: To wit, Tarasius: But that* — Here the whole Assembly interrupted her with loud Acclamations, and as if it had been done by Agreement, nothing was heard but the Name of *Tarasius*, whom all judg'd to be the fittest Person to fill the patriarchal See. Then the Empress extremely satisfied to see her Intentions so fully answer'd, resumed her Discourse thus. *But as I was going to tell you, said she, he refuses to accept of this Charge: And 'tis therefore but reasonable, he should here satisfy the Assembly, why he opposes a Choice, which we cannot doubt but comes from God himself: Since the unanimous Voice of the People join'd with that both of the Emperor and Empress may justly be regarded as the Voice of God.*

In Effect, *Tarasius* was an extraordinary Man, and possess'd in an eminent Degree all the Qualities necessary for that high Post. The Empress therefore sent for him to the Assembly, and order'd him to let them know the Reasons of his Refusal, which he told them was no other, but because he thought he could not in Conscience accept of the Government of a See, which had been cut off from the Communion of the Catholick Church, but upon Condition that a general Council should be call'd to determine the Dispute, which divided them concerning Images. Which he had no sooner said, but the whole Assembly cry'd

cry'd out unanimously, that it was necessary to call a general Council, which they therefore demanded most earnestly of the Emperor and Empress. Whereupon *Tarasius* was solemnly proclaim'd Patriarch, and consecrated soon after upon *Christmas* Day. As soon as he found himself fix'd in his See, he fail'd not to inform Pope *Adrian* of his Election, and the Demand he had made of a general Council together with his Profession of Faith. The Empress also in Performance of her Promise sent a Bishop to *Rome* to entreat the Pope in her own and the Emperor's Name to come in Person to *Constantinople* to preside at the Council, or if that could not possibly be, to send at least some Persons of eminent Learning to supply his Place; as he did in Effect by sending two such Legates as they desired with a long Letter to the Emperor and Empress to exhort them to employ their utmost Zeal for the Extirpation of the reigning Heresy. He also wrote to the Patriarch, whom he received into his Communion with Joy, expressing the Hopes he had that he would labour effectually to abolish *Iconoclasm*.

In the mean Time *Constantine* and *Irenè* had by their Letters brought to *Constantinople* the Bishops and Abbots of their Empire, where they were soon after join'd by the Popes Legates and the Deputies of the three *Eastern* Patriarchs, who could not come in Person by Reason of the violent Oppression, under which they were kept by the *Calif* of the *Saracens*. So that every Thing being in a Readiness for the Council it held it's first Session in the Month of *August* An: 786 in the great Church of the Apostles; where *Constantin* and *Irenè* were present not in the Church itself and amongst the Bishops, but in the Galleries

above, from whence they saw the Ceremony of the Opening of the Council, which was no sooner begun, but a frightful Noise was heard all on a sudden out of the Church, which put a Stop to it. It seems there were in the Council some of the old *Iconoclast* Bishops, who had been thirty six Years before at the Sham-council of *Copronymus*. These had done all they could to hinder the Calling of this Council, which they plainly foresaw would condemn theirs. But finding that they labour'd in vain, they caball'd secretly with the Officers of the Emperor's Guards, who were all stanch *Iconoclasts*, to come to their Aid. These being the only arm'd Troops that were at *Constantinople*, and thinking therefore that they might undertake any Thing, especially during a Minority, suffer'd themselves to be prevail'd upon by the *Iconoclast* Bishops, and promised them that they would find effectual Means to break up the Assembly. In effect, as soon as they saw the Council was met, they set their Soldiers at work, who encouraged by their Officers, and instructed what they were to do, ran tumultuously with their Swords drawn to the Church-doors, and cry'd out with a frightful Noise, that they would not suffer the Memory of their Emperor *Copronymus* to be dishonour'd, and that if they proceeded it should cost the Patriarch, and all those Bishops, who were the Advocates of Images, their Lives. The Empress surprized at this unforeseen Accident, against which no Precautions had been taken, and finding that there was no Remedy for the present, made a Sign to the Bishops to retire, as they did, and as she herself did with the Emperor.

The *Iconoclast* Bishops and Soldiers seeing that their Design had succeeded made great Boasts of their Victory, and Sham-council of *Constantinople*,  
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the Authority whereof they thought they had establish'd by these violent Proceedings. But the prudent *Irenè* soon found Means to bring them to an Account for this Affront, and render the Council entirely free. For as soon as she was secure of the Legions of the *East*, who were quarter'd in *Thrace*, and the Officers whereof were all brought into her Interest by *Stauracius*, she contrived to have it reported every where, that the *Saracens* had broke the Peace and invaded *Asia*, and that it was therefore necessary for the Troops to march against them. After which she order'd the Emperor's Equipage and Train to pass the Streights into *Bitbynia*, which obliged his Guards to do the same, in order to join the Body of the Army, which she pretended was to have it's Rendevous there. At the same Time the Legions of the *East*, who under Pretence of likewise marching thither were come as far as *Constantinople*, enter'd the City, and were garrison'd there instead of the Mutineers. Then the Empress, who saw she was absolute Mistress, sent Officers to them to command them to deliver up their Arms, and retire to their respective Homes, which surprized them so, that finding themselves alone, without Provisions, without Money and Towns to retire to, and fearing least the whole Army of the *East* should set upon them, and cut them to Pieces, they obey'd without Resistance. After which the Empress banish'd out of *Constantinople* all that belong'd to them, and having made a new Regiment of Guards with Officers, whose Fidelity she was assured of, she found herself out of all Danger of being any more insulted. So that next Year in the Spring she assembled again all the Bishops and Abbots, who met at *Nicea* in *Bitbynia*, where she intended to hold the Council



out of Respect to the great *Constantin*, who had there held the first general Council.

*Tarasius* came thither in the Month of *September* together with the Pope's Legates, and Deputies of the three *Eastern* Patriarchs, as Monsieur *Maimbourg* has proved unanswerably. The Assembly was very numerous; for there were above three hundred and fifty Bishops, many of which bore the glorious Marks of what they had suffer'd under *Copronymus*. The first Session was open'd on the 24th of *September*. Three of the fallen Bishops, who came to it to renounce publickly their Heresy, and anathematize the Sham-council of *Constantinople*, which they had been at, were received into the Catholick Communion. But some others to the Number of Eight, who had been particularly obstinate in maintaining the Authority of that Council, were put off to the next Session in order to be more strictly examined, whether their Repentance was sincere, which being judg'd to be so, they were order'd to present their Request together with their Profession of Faith at the following Session, which being approved, they were restored to their Sees.

The Council met again the fourth Time on the first of *October*, when the Doctrine of the Catholick Church was after an exact Discussion proved from innumerable Testimonies of Scriptures and Fathers, from the Practice of the ancient Church, and the Wonders God had wrought from Time to Time by holy Images, but particularly one of a very fresh Date, whereof there were Thousands of unexceptionable Witnesses. This celebrated Miracle happen'd at *Berytè* in *Syria*, where the *Jews* having crucified an Image of our Saviour, there issued out of it so great a Quantity of Blood and Water, that some Part of it was sent both to the

the *Eastern* and *Western* Churches: And it wrought so many miraculous Cures upon the *Jews*, that all those of *Berytè* were converted and baptized.

In the fifth Session, which was held on the 4th of *October*, besides refuting the false Reasonings of the *Iconoclasts*, they were proved guilty of a shameful Fraud, in having either falsified or burnt in the Time of *Copronymus's* Persecution all the Books they could lay hold of, that had been writ in Defence of the Catholick Truth. The next Day, in which the sixth Session was held, the long Definition of the Sham-council of *Constantinople* was read, and refuted Article by Article. At the same Time there was a Discovery made of another Fraud used by the first *Iconoclasts* in fathering supposititious Books against Images upon Catholick Writers: Chiefly two, which they attributed to *St. Epiphanius*, who was manifestly proved not to have been the Author of them; *First*, Because in his Catalogue of all the Heresies, that had been to his Time, he speaks not a Word of Images: And *2dly*, Because his Disciples after his Death built a magnificent Church in honour of him, wherein amongst other Ornaments was his Picture; which we may be sure they would not have exposed there, if their Master had in his Writings condemn'd that Practice.

After this diligent Examination of all the Arguments on both Sides the Council drew up it's Definition of Faith relating to Images, wherein are these express Words: That Images are to be honour'd and respected, yet in such a Manner, that the Worship of Latria [or divine Worship] which according to our Faith is due to God alone, is not to be paid to them. I desire the Reader to take particular Notice of this, because in a *Latin Copy* of this Council sent to the Council of *Frankford*,

*Constantin* Bishop of *Cyprus* is by Mistake of the *Latin* Impression made to say quite the contrary to this, which is rank Heresy, and was the Occasion of their condemning the second *Nicene* Council.

The Definition of Faith being thus drawn up was sign'd by all the Bishops, and the Council was concluded with the usual Acclamations and Prayers for the Prosperity of the Emperor and Empress. After which they sent synodical Letters to all the Churches, and particularly to Pope *Adrian*, who approved the Council, which however was not confirm'd in due Form till some Years after.

The Empress, who would not leave *Constantinople*, being inform'd of the happy Conclusion of the Council, judg'd it expedient to have it assembled there, and confirm'd in her and the Emperor's Presence to give a greater Lustre to it; which was done accordingly in the great Hall of the Palace, where the Emperor and Empress attended by the whole Court and Magistrates of the City being present, the Council's Definition of Faith was read with a clear and loud Voice, that the whole Assembly might hear it. Then the Empress addressing herself to the Bishops, ask'd them whether the said Definition had been approved by unanimous Consent? To which they all answer'd that it had, and presented the Emperor and Empress with a Copy of it sign'd by all their Hands, desiring them to honour it with their Subscription, which they did. So that the Council being thus received in the Presence of their imperial Majesties with the general Applause of all the Orders, Images were re-establish'd in all Parts of the City as before, and the Bishops return'd to their respective Dioceses to restore to them

them the Ornaments, whereof the Heresy of the *Iconoclasts* had robb'd them.

The Church of *Constantinople* began now to taste the Sweet of the Peace, which the *Nicene* Council had procured them, when the ambitious *Irenè* replunged herself into new Troubles, which proved equally fatal to the Church and State. A Match being concluded between her Son *Constantin* and *Charlemagne's* Daughter, she found Means to break it off by her Artifices; because she fear'd least the Authority of so great a Prince might put a Restraint upon her's: And by her imperious Treatment of her Son obliged him tho' then nineteen Years old to marry an *Armenian* of mean Extraction call'd *Mary*, whom he hated in his Heart, being at the same Time passionately in Love with one *Theodora* a Maid of Honour to the Empress: Whence the cunning *Irenè* took Occasion to render him both odious and contemptible by often saying in Publick on purpose that he might hear of it, that she was sorry for having engaged him in such an unhappy Marriage, but that Means might be found to set him at Liberty to marry where-ever he should please.

This was enough for a yong Man possess'd with a double Passion of Hatred and Love. But the Difficulty was to find a plausible Pretence for a Divorce from one, with whom he had lived without Scruple for six Years. For this End he suborn'd Witnesses to swear, that the Empress *Mary* had form'd a Design to poison him. But the Patriarch, who could not be imposed upon by this foul Artifice, declared always, that he would sooner die, than consent to his second Marriage, which was contrary to the Law of God. So that the Emperor perceiving the Patriarch to be inflexible, told him that he would not only abo-

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lish Images, as his Predecessors had done, but Christianity itself by setting up heathen Idols in their Place, if he refused to approve of his Divorce.

Then the Patriarch considering on the one Hand the extreme Danger Religion was in, if he opposed the Torrent of his Passion directly, and on the other, that it was not lawful to commit one Sin, tho' a lesser, to avoid a greater, thought at least, that he might stand neuter to avoid pushing Things to an Extremity when all was at Stake. He therefore took a middle Way between the two Rocks he was afraid of by doing nothing positively, that might look like an Approbation of what he had declared against with so much Vehemence and Zeal; but he resolved at the same Time not to employ the Authority he had to hinder others from doing, what himself refused to do. So that the Patriarch would neither give the Veil to the Empress *Mary*, who for the Sake of Peace had consented to it, nor marry the Emperor to *Theodora*, but he connived both at the one and the other being done by Persons, who were not so scrupulous upon the Matter.

Thus the Patriarch by his Moderation prevented the Ruin of Religion, and saved the Honour of the second *Nicene* Council, which at the same Time was vigourously attack'd in the *West* by the Council of *Frankford*, upon Occasion of the Mistake I have just now mention'd; but was received universally by all Churches some Years after, and continued to be so till *Luther* and *Calvin* set up again *Iconoclasm* in those Places, where their Heresies prevail'd; as is manifest from the Nakedness of all the reform'd Churches, in which there is not so much as even a Crucifix to be seen.

But

But tho' *Irenè* was successful in her Contrivance of the Divorce, and had by her malicious Advice put her Son *Constantin* upon several barbarous Actions to render him odious, yet he continued to be acknowledg'd sole Emperor, as he had been proclaim'd, when he came to be of Age, both by the Army of *Cappadocia* and *Armenia*, and even by the Legions that were at *Constantinople*. This the ambitious *Irenè* could not bear: And therefore finding that her other Contrivances had not their intended Effect, she resolved upon the most barbarous Action, that ever enter'd into a Woman's Thoughts, which was to pluck out her Son's Eyes to render him incapable of Governing, and by that Means to get the whole Authority into her own Hands. This was executed with so much Cruelty and Violence, that he died of it. But it was not long before she received the deserved Reward of her Ambition. For one *Nicephorus* a Man of Quality, but extremely wicked, being proclaim'd Emperor by the Senators banish'd her into the Island of *Lesbos*, where she died soon after with Grief.

This *Nicephorus* restored the *Iconoclasts* to the Condition they were in before the second *Nicene* Council, and all the good he did during his whole Reign was that upon the Death of the Patriarch *Tarasius* he chose the illustrious Solitary *Nicephorus* for his Successor with the universal Applause of all the Orders, who had a singular Veneration for his eminent Learning and Virtue. As for the Emperor *Nicephorus*, he was after a short Reign kill'd in a War against *Crummus* King of the *Bulgarians*, and his Son and Successor *Stauracius* reign'd but two Months: In whose Place *Michael Rangabè* *Curopolates* was chosen by the unanimous Consent of the Senate, People, and Legions.

*Michael*

## Michel Rangabe

**T**HIS *Michel* had all the Christian Virtues and Qualities requisite for an Emperor to render his People perfectly happy, but was an utter Stranger to military Affairs. In Effect he was no sooner Crown'd Emperor, but he took a Course directly opposite to that of his wicked Predecessor, by whose Avarice and Cruelty the People had groan'd under an intolerable Oppression. For he spared no Trouble, Care, or Cost to make the State flourish, and even every particular Person to be easy as far as was possible. But he applied himself principally to the Re-establishment of Religion by wholesome Laws against Hereticks, and particularly against *Iconoclasts*, of whom he purged the imperial City, where under the Protection of *Nicephorus* they had begun to practise their usual Insolences. He even harangued his Army upon that Subject with so much Force and Zeal, that they all declared against *Iconoclasm*, the Progress whereof he stopp'd afterwards by the Punishment of the most remarkable Mutineers, whom however he only order'd to be whipt, excepting a wicked Hermite, who had the Impudence to commit a thousand Outrages upon an Image of the Blessed Virgin, and was therefore condemn'd to have his Tongue cut out, of which he died without Repentance. Thus the Course of the Evil was stopt, and Religion and Devotion began to flourish again as after the *Nicene* Council. But this Happiness was of short Durance by the unlucky Decision of a Case of Conscience relating to a Condition of Peace, which *Crummus* after the Defeat of *Nicephorus* insisted peremptorily upon, and was according to that Decision rejected  
by

by the pious *Michel*. I omit the Particulars of that Affair as being foreign to the Subject of Images, and will only acquaint my Reader, that upon *Michel's* Refusal of it War was declared on both Sides, and numerous Armies brought into the Field. But as *Michel* understood but little of the Art of War, his Army was extremely weaken'd by his unskilful Conduct, and at last entirely defeated: To which however the base Treachery of *Leo* the *Armenian*, who succeeded him in the Empire, contributed in a very great Measure. For in the very Heat of the Battel, even when by the Bravery of *Aplaces*, who commanded the left Wing of the Emperor's Army, the right Wing of the *Bulgarians* began to give Ground, the perfidious *Leo*, instead of falling upon their left Wing, drew off from the Army with the whole Body of Troops which he commanded and soon after fled without striking a Stroke: Which the Body of the Army, who were not the bravest Men in the World, perceiving, and thinking all was lost, abandon'd the Emperor, who commanded them, and took likewise to their Heels. Whereupon the whole *Bulgarian* Army fell upon the left Wing of the brave *Aplaces*, and cut them all to Pieces, excepting a very few, who made their Escape by Flight.

The Battel was no sooner lost, but the perfidious *Leo* got it insinuated every where by his Emissaries, that it was lost by the Ignorance and Cowardice of *Michel*, and that it therefore behoved them to bestow the Empire upon a Person of *Leo's* known Conduct and Valour, who by a concerted Collusion was to refuse it obstinately, till *Michel le Begue*, of whom we shall have more hereafter, should come with his Sword drawn, and threaten to run him through if he persisted  
in



In his Refusal. This was done accordingly, and he was back'd by his whole Legion, and the rest of the Troops. So that *Leo* pretending to be unable to resist the imperious Will of the whole Army yielded to their violent Importunity, and was proclaim'd Emperor: Which the good *Michel* was no sooner inform'd of, but he resolved to yield up the Empire to his perfidious Rival, to whom he sent immediately his Crown and Purple declaring that he would not suffer one Drop of Christian Blood to be shed for his Sake.

### *Leo the Armenian.*

**T**HIS *Leo* had his future Elevation to the Empire foretold like *Leo the Isaurian*, whom he resolved to imitate in every Thing, but particularly in his having been the Author of *Iconoclasm*. For as it was in a Manner entirely abolish'd by the second *Nicene* Council and Zeal of his Predecessor *Michel*, we may regard him as a second Heresiarch and Author of that Heresy. He also imitated the *Isaurian's* Wariness in taking his Measures for Fear of popular Commotions, which Changes in Religion, if not manag'd with the utmost Caution, occasion for the most Part, if not always.

The first Thing therefore he did was to make sure of such Persons at Court, whom he knew were *Iconoclasts* in their Hearts, but durst not make Profession of it in the preceding Reign. He knew also that there were several in *Constantinople*, even amongst the Officers and Magistrates, who had no Religion at all, but were always ready to embrace that, which they judg'd to be most for their Interest. These therefore he assembled together with some of the Nobility, and made

made a long Speech to them, wherein he set forth, though in very false Colours, that the Reigns and Ends of all those, who had been Enemies to Images, had been prosperous; whereas on the contrary those who had been the most zealous for them, had been unprosperous in both, which he attributed to God's Disapprobation of them.

The Assembly, which, as I have said, was composed partly of such as were *Iconoclasts* in their Hearts, and partly of such, as were of no Religion at all, answer'd the Emperor, that they were entirely at his Devotion to dispose of them, as he should think fitting. However he obliged them not to declare his Intentions openly, but only to insinuate in their familiar Discourses with the Nobility and People such plausible Reasons in Favour of *Iconoclasm*, as might insensibly incline them to it. This had it's due Success, and great Numbers were perverted by it. So that the Emperor ventured to make a bolder Step, and call the Patriarch to him, whom he told, that the People were extremely Scandalized at the Honour paid to Images, and attributed to it all the Misfortunes of the preceding Reigns: Desiring him therefore to condescend at least so far to their Weakness as to suppress it for a Time; or if he were not disposed to do this, to give them a solid Reason, why the Honouring of Images was not expressly commanded in Scripture. To which the Patriarch easily answer'd, that there was no Danger of Scandal from the People, but only from the Malice of those, who endeavour'd to pervert them by the very Reasons he had mention'd. That temporal Prosperity or Adversity were but equivocal Proofs either of the Goodness or Badness of any Cause: That however there were greater publick Calamities in the Reigns of

*Leo*

*Leo the Isaurian*, and *Constantin Copronymus*, that in the late Reigns of *Constantin* and *Irenè* and *Michel*: Witness that dreadful Plague of three whole Years, which changed *Constantinople* into a meer Desert. And as to the Emperor's saying that the Honouring of Images was not commanded in Scripture, he answer'd that his imperial Majesty himself practised many Things not mention'd in Scripture, but barely on Account of the Church's constant Tradition commanding or at least Authorizing those Practices: As that he kiss'd the Book of the Gospel, revered the Cross, made the Sign of it on his Forehead, fasted the Lent, and kept the Sunday instead of Saturday holy: None of which Practices were commanded in Scripture, but were grounded wholly and solely upon Tradition.

This Answer was too clear and solid for the Emperor to make any Reply to, who therefore only told him, that being himself no Doctor he could not pretend to dispute with one, that was perfectly versed in all the Subtleties of that Art, and could as easily prove a Falsehood as a Truth. But that he intended to call together all the Bishops that were at Court together with the Abbots of the principal Monasteries of *Constantinople*, that they might confer together in his Presence about the Article in Question. In Effect the Emperor came to the Assembly attended by the Senate and principal Nobility besides a great Number of *Iconoclasts*, who came with Joy to maintain the Dispute, not doubting but the Advantage would be judg'd to be on their Side. The Patriarch also came with several eminent Bishops, and the Famous *Theodore* Abbot of the great Monastery of *Studius*, who was one of the most holy and

and learned Men of his Age, and was to be their principal Speaker.

As soon as they had all taken their Places, the Emperor turning towards the Catholick Bishops and Abbots, and taking a little Image out of his Bosom, which he kiss'd, told them that by that Action they might judge that he was of their Belief: But because there were a great many learned Men who question'd the Truth of it, he would have both Sides propose their Reasons, that upon Hearing of them he might judge, which of the two had the Truth on it's Side, to which all should be obliged to submit. To which the Catholicks answer'd with a wonderful Freedom, that they could not enter into Dispute with the Emperor's *Iconoclasts* for three Reasons. *First*, Because when an Article of Faith had once been defined by a general Council, it was forbid by the Canons to call the Truth of it in Question, or make it the Subject of a new Examination after that. *2dly*, That though it were allow'd by the Canons to take it again under Examination, the Palace was not a proper Place to do it in but the Church, nor was the Emperor a legal Judge in Matters of Religion but the Bishops alone according to *St. Paul 2 Cor. C. 12*. And *3dly*, Because they knew for certain that whatever they should say in Defence of the Catholick Practice, the Emperor was fully determin'd beforehand to give Judgment in Favour of his *Iconoclasts*, who were protected by his Authority, and had all Encouragement possible given them to publish their Errors. After which the Abbot *Theodore* made a long Discourse upon the same Heads, and concluded, *that though an Angel should come from Heaven, and teach a Doctrine contrary to what the Council had decided, he would have no Regard for*



him: Much less would he have a Deference to the Emperor's Judgment, whose only Business was to govern the State without meddling in Matters of Religion, which belong'd to Bishops alone according to God's own Appointment.

This bold Speech exasperated the Emperor, who was now no longer Master of his Passion, in such a Manner, that he commanded all the Catholick Bishops and Abbots to be gone immediately, and forbid them with many Threats not to speak or write any Thing in Defence of Images. Many complied, and amongst others the Patriarch for Fear of Exasperating the Emperor by an unnecessary and unseasonable Zeal, and contented themselves to practise their private Devotions in a quiet Retirement: but others were scandalized at it, and regarded it as a criminal Silence. In Effect the Emperor seeing the Catholicks so very positive took Occasion from it to encourage underhand a Troop of Soldiers to abuse in a very outrageous Manner the Image of our Saviour, which *Copronymus* had pull'd down, and *Irene* had set up again. But whilst they were thus Executing the Emperor's own secret Orders, he appear'd as by Chance passing by, and told the People, that to prevent the like Abuses for the future it were best to take away the Image from the publick Place, where it stood; which was done immediately, and he was not a little pleased to think he had by this Artifice conceal'd his malicious Contrivance.

Upon this the zealous Abbot *Theodore* went to the Patriarch, and represented to him the Prevarication and dangerous Consequences of his Silence in such strong Terms, that Returning in a Moment to his former Zeal and Courage he acted even with more Vigour than he had done before.

before. For having assembled in his Palace all the Bishops, Abbots, and learned Men he could find at *Constantinople*, he encouraged them so effectually to stand up for the Defence of the Catholick Faith, that instead of the cowardly Silence, which they had promised the Emperor, they drew up a Writing, which they all sign'd, and by which they obliged themselves to defend the Honouring of holy Images with the last Drop of their Blood.

This bold proceeding gave the Emperor, as resolute as he was, no small Uneasiness. For he fear'd least the People finding themselves supported by so many great Men, who far surpass'd the *Iconoclasts* in Number, should have the Courage to rise up against him, if he should undertake openly to Change the State of Religion. He therefore resolved to carry on his Diffimulation still farther, till he could find Means to break this Confederacy, which he foresaw would not hold long. For when the Patriarch, who, to atone for his former Weakness, was now become as stout as a Lion, came to him some Time before *Christmas* to conjure him not to make any Change in the publick Worship, and to assure him at the same Time that if he had been the Occasion of this Storm, he was ready to give up his Patriarchship, so the Catholick Faith was but secured, he answer'd him thus with a profound Diffimulation, *what! that I should suffer my Patriarch, whom I honour as my Father, to be removed from me, or Change the State of Religion! I'll perish first. What I did was only to satisfy some wavering Minds, who doubted of the Truth, and desired it might be examined for their private Satisfaction. But for my ownself, God forbid I should doubt of it.* Upon which he pull'd out the little Image he had

in his Bosom, and kiss'd it as he had done before Nay upon *Christmas-Day* he came in Ceremony to the Church, where he paid the usual Respect to the Image of *Christ* in the Stable, which according to Custom was presented to him.

This gave great Joy to the Catholicks: But it did not last long. For on the Feast of the *Epiphany*, which the *Greeks* keep with great Solemnity, the Image of our Saviour being brought to him, he refused to kiss it, and only kiss'd the Cross. This made the People call their Emperor a meer *Cameleon*, who daily changed his Shape, and was an *Iconoclast* one Day, and a Catholick another. However he acted more openly from that Time forward, and treated in private Conversations with the Bishops that were at Court, whose weak side he knew, not doubting but to bring them over to him.

It must be own'd that the Court is a strange poisonous Air for Bishops to live in. For the greatest Part of those very Bishops, who but a few Days before had declared that they would spend the last Drop of their Blood in Defence of Images, as soon as the Emperor treated with them in particular, and gave them Hopes of his particular Favour, became immediately the most zealous *Iconoclasts*, and had even the Impudence to exhort the Patriarch himself to follow their Example, assuring him that he would otherwise be most certainly deprived of his See. But the Patriarch detesting their infamous Apostacy sent them away to the Emperor to let him know, that he would always adhere to the Doctrine of the Catholick Church, and never communicate with those, who had abandon'd it. Nay he was seized with such a sensible Grief for the Fall of his Brethren; that it threw him into a dangerous  
Sickness,

Sickness, and his Life was despair'd of. But the Emperor understanding that he was recover'd, order'd him to be carried away in the Night by a Troop of Soldiers, and banish'd to the Isle of *Proconese*, where twelve Years after he ended his glorious Course, and died in Banishment for the Defence of his Faith.

As soon as the Patriarch *Nicephorus* was deprived of his See, the Emperor made Choice of his Favourite *Theodore* to succeed him. He was indeed a Man of Quality, but extremely ignorant, and debauch'd without Disguise even when he was Patriarch: But over and above a most furious *Iconoclast*, and the very Man that had been the chief Instrument of Engaging the Emperor in that Heresy; who having now a Patriarch entirely at his Devotion, call'd an Assembly of his Bishops in the Church of St. *Sophie*, where *Copronymus's* sham-Council was received, and the second *Nicene* Council condemn'd. All the illustrious Patriarchs, who had with so much Courage stood up for the Catholick Faith were anathematized: And they even proceeded to that Excess of Rage and Fury, that all the Catholick Bishops, whom they had dragg'd to the Assembly by Force, were trampled under Foot, and cover'd, as they were, all over with Wounds thrown into Dungeons. After which the Emperor publish'd an Edict like that of *Leo the Isaurian* and *Copronymus* commanding all Images to be pull'd down and either burnt or thrown into the Sea; and a violent Persecution was rais'd against all those, who had the Courage to oppose the Torrent: Great Numbers of which after having been most cruelly tormented were sent into Banishment, where they suffer'd a lingering Martyrdom, and many of them



died of the Miseries to which they were there exposed.

The famous *Theodore* the *Studite* was one of those, who felt the Smart of this Persecution. This generous Champion of the Catholick Faith was so far from being frighten'd by the Emperor's Edict, that he made his Religious Walk every Day in Procession with Images in their Hands lifted up, and singing Hymns in Honour of them. Providence seem'd to have preserved this great Man for the Comfort of some and Support of others. For the Emperor finding that the Way of Rigour had not all the Success he had proposed to himself, resolved to have once more Recourse to Artifice. For which End he recall'd some Monks from Banishment, and promised them an entire Freedom of keeping and honouring Images in their own Monasteries, provided they would but communicate once with their Patriarch. These good Men, who were willing to be deliver'd from their Sufferings, and return to their Monasteries, flatter'd themselves that there would be no great Harm in so Doing, and were ready to give into the Snare, when *Theodore*, whom the Emperor had not recall'd, being inform'd of it wrote several Letters to them, and remonstrated with so much Force the Unlawfulness of it, that many of them absolutely rejected the Proposal, and amongst others the Abbot *Nicetas*, whom the Emperor threw into a horrible Dungeon, where he was till the Tyrant's Death, who discharg'd his Rage with greater Violence upon *Theodore*; for he banish'd him still farther, and shut him up in a dark Hole under Ground, where he could see nothing, and had no Commerce but with his Jailers.

After

After he had been kept a long Time in this Prison, the Emperor, who perceived that he still found Means to act in Defence of the Church, sent him Prisoner to *Smirna* under the Guard of the Bishop of the Place, who was a violent *Iconoclast*. And here it was that *Theodore* became more famous than ever by an Event, which made a great Noise. For it happen'd that one *Bardas* a great Persecuter of the Catholics, who then commanded the Army in the *East*, fell ill of a Distemper, which brought him to the last Extremity. His Life being despair'd of he had Recourse to *Theodore* by the Advice of a Catholick Servant. The Saint having remonstrated to him the horrible Crimes he had committed in Persecuting the Catholics, and particularly those of the Monastery of *Studius*, where he had caused several Monks to be whipt to Death, *Bardas* promised to renounce his Heresy, and reform his Life entirely, provided he obtain'd of God the Recovery of his Health. *Theodore* obtain'd it for him by his Prayers, and obliged him at the same Time to pay the usual Respects to an Image of the Blessed Virgin, assuring him that if he put himself under her Protection, God would bless him, but that he would die miserably if he rejected her Protection by dishonouring her Images. *Bardas* promised every Thing the Saint required of him. But he was no sooner cured, but forgetting all his Promises he return'd again to his former Heresy at the Perswasion of the *Iconoclast* Bishop, who, to appear to be a miraculous Man, gave him a Glass of Oil, which he bless'd assuring him that it would keep him in perfect Health. But he had no sooner annointed himself with it, but he relapsed into his former Condition, and according to the Saint's Prediction died a few Days after.

This was written by a contemporary Historian, who would not have dared to forge a Fact of that Importance, when Thousands could have given him the Lie, and proved him to be a most impudent Impostor.

This Saint notwithstanding his long Imprisonment, during which he was treated with the utmost Barbarity, found Means to write an Infinity of Letters to all sorts of Persons to instruct some, and comfort others, or encourage them to Martyrdom, or at least to prevent their Apostatizing during the Storm of that terrible Persecution raised by *Leo*, which God at length put an End to by the tragical Death of that persecuting Emperor, which I shall now relate.

As soon as *Leo* was Master of the Empire, he fail'd not to raise to the highest Dignities his great Confident *Michael le Begue*, with whom he had acted the ridiculous Farce, I have mention'd, to get himself proclaim'd Emperor. But this perfidious Friend thinking pethaps that he should gain as many of the Nobility for himself as he had done for *Leo*, form'd a Conspiracy against him, and as he had raised him resolved to pull him down. But as he was of a brutal Temper, and amongst other Vices was given to excessive Drinking, and incapable of keeping a Secret, when he was heated with Drink, he talk'd so often, and in such an odd Manner against the Emperor, letting always some menacing Expressions escape him, and half Words, which signified more than they express'd, that the Emperor, who before had always overlook'd his irregular Conduct as the Extravagances of a Sot and inconsiderate Fool, having now order'd him to be arrested and examined before him on *Christmas-Eve*, found by his own Confession that he was really

really guilty of having conspired against his Life, he was condemn'd by the Judges to be burnt alive in the Furnace of the Bannios of the Palace.

They were actually leading him to Execution, and the Emperor, who was resolved to see it done effectually, was following at a Distance, when the Empress *Theodosia* surprized at the News of it came running to him in great Hast, and partly by Intreaties, partly by Reproaches and Remonstrances that such a bloody Execution would be a horrible Prophanation of the Holiness of so great and venerable a Feast, prevail'd upon him to have it put off till the Feast was over. So he committed him to the Custody of the *Papias* or Keeper of the Keys of the Palace: And charg'd him to keep him shut up in his own Appartment with Irons upon him fasten'd with a Padlock, whereof himself kept the Key; so great was the Fear he had lest he should make his Escape. Then turning to the Empress said to her as if he had a clear Foresight of his Misfortune, *well, Madam, you have obliged me to comply with you: But you will see the Event, and how both you and I and our Children will be treated.*

These Words made no Impression on the Empress, but the Emperor was full of Disquiets and Fears, which hindring him from Sleeping he got up in the Night, and went all alone through a private Door of the Apartment of the *Papias* to see how his Prisoner was guarded. But finding him fast asleep upon the Officer's own Bed, and him also asleep upon the Boards, he concluded there was a good Understanding betwixt them; and so went out making some threatening Signs, which were taken Notice of by one of the Guards, who knew him and acquainted the *Papias* with what had happen'd, who thereupon look'd upon himself



himself as a lost Man. But *Michael* told him with the greatest Assurance that he would answer for his Safety, provided he could but find one, whom he could depend safely upon to carry a Letter to such Persons as it should be directed to. This was easily done. One *Theodist*, in whom the *Papias* had an entire Confidence was pitch'd upon to carry the Letter, wherein he charged his Confidants not to fail Executing without Delay what he directed them to do: That otherwise he would accuse them to the Emperor of their having been Accomplices with him. So that these perceiving that they would be most certainly ruined if they did not obey his Orders, resolved to do it out of Hand.

The Place and Time they pitch'd upon was the Church itself, when the Emperor should be at the *Christmas* Office. It was the Custom upon solemn Feasts for all the Ecclesiasticks, that were to perform the Office to come early in the Morning to the Palace to conduct the Emperor from thence in a solemn Procession to the Throne prepared for him in the Nef of the Church. At the same Time therefore that the Priests and Singers enter'd the Palace, the Conspirators who were in Disguise mix'd with them with Swords, short Hatchets and Daggers under their Cloaths, and following the Procession to the Church placed themselves not far from the Emperor's Throne in a Corner to be as it were more recollected at their Devotions. The Emperor came to Church with a Cap on, which he had drawn down a great way over his Head because it was very cold that Day: And having placed himself on his Throne was ready to perform his Part in the Office according to his usual Custom. For he had the Weakness to think himself an excellent Singer, and

and that every Body was charm'd with his Voice, though it was the most untunable and disagreeable that possibly could be. So that when he intoned a Canticle, which pleased him very much and begins with this Verse, *They have despised all for the Love of the Lord*, the People could not forbear Laughing both at his Manner of Singing, which was very Shocking, and because the wicked Life he led agreed so little with the Words he sung.

His intoning of this Verse was the Signal agreed upon by the Conspirators, because they were sure that as soon as the Choir came to that Canticle, which was the Seventh, the Emperor could not forbear singing. In effect, as soon as they came to it he stood up, and fail'd not to intone with all the Strength of his loud rough Voice, *They have despised all for the Love of the Lord*, upon which the Conspirators ran straight towards him with their naked Swords and Daggers, but with so much Precipitation, that at first they mistook for him the Master of the Choir, who stood near the Emperor, and a Cap on like his. But being made sensible of their Mistake, they ran with the greatest Fury towards *Leo*, who had fled for Sanctuary to the great Altar, for which he thought they would have some Respect; but his Hopes were vain, for they set upon him all together, and gave him so many Wounds, that they left him dead upon the Place.

### *Michael le Begue.*

**L**EO was no sooner dead, but the Conspirators, whose Number encreased continually, having made themselves Masters of the Palace, went straight to the Appartment of the *Papias*, whence they

they convey'd *Michael* to the great Hall of the Emperor's Apartment, and there, without giving themselves the Leisure to take off his Irons, whereof *Leo* had the Key, having placed him on the Throne they proclaim'd him Emperor, whilst others of their Party dragg'd *Leo's* torn Body to the great Place to let the People see, that they had nothing more to fear from him, but were to have another Master. In effect, they all acknowledg'd him immediately after. For *Michael*, without losing even so much Time as to bathe himself or put off his dirty Cloaths, but contenting himself to have only his Irons struck off with a Hammer, went towards Noon to St. *Sophie*, where Multitudes of People were assembled to see such a surprizing Spectacle, and there received the imperial Crown from the Hands of the Patriarch, and took Possession of the Empire, not an Officer or noble Man daring to oppose it, though he was the most unworthy of it of any Man upon Earth. Monsieur *Maimbourg* gives the following Account of him.

“ He was born, says he, at *Amorium* a Town  
 “ of the upper *Phrygia* of mean Extraction, and  
 “ of Parents so Poor, that his Father was forced  
 “ to board him at a Village with a poor *Jewish*  
 “ Woman, who besides the Superstitions of her  
 “ Sect, taught him nothing but the Nature and  
 “ Proprieties of domestick Animals together with  
 “ the Manner how to bring them up. This was  
 “ the only Thing he ever learnt, and was so delighted with, that he was perpetually talking  
 “ of it even when he was Emperor. As for any  
 “ Thing else he was the most ignorant Man alive. For he could neither read nor write, not  
 “ even his own Name, which likewise he could  
 “ not pronounce without stammering, whence  
 “ he

“ he had the Surname of *le Begue*, that is, the  
“ *Stammerer*. But the most brutal Quality he  
“ had was that when he was Emperor he could  
“ not endure Men of Learning, or that any  
“ Man should apply himself to Arts and Sciences,  
“ for Fear they should convince him of his Ig-  
“ norance, or undertake to oppose his wicked  
“ Extravagances in Matters of Religion—Be-  
“ sides this he was naturally of a most vicious  
“ Temper, and his Manners were as corrupt as  
“ his Religion; being perfidious, ungrateful,  
“ cruel, given to Perjury, Debauchery, and  
“ Drunkenness; and Coverous to an exorbitant  
“ Excess. The only good Quality he had was  
“ that he was a Man of Courage, bold in Un-  
“ dertaking, and intrepid in Executing.

This is Monsieur *Maimbourg*'s Character of *Michael le Begue*, who in the Beginning conceal'd in some Measure his bad Qualities and Impiety in order to gain the Affection of the People by taking a different Course from that of *Leo*, who had render'd himself very odious particularly by his Cruelty to the Catholicks. For by his very first Ediſt he recall'd all those, whom *Leo* had banish'd on the Score of Religion. He likewise obliged all the Catholick Bishops to come to *Constantinople*, where he told them he should be glad if they would assemble with the other Party to confer together about the Means of an Agreement. But they answer'd him, that according to the Scriptures and Canons it was not lawful for them to have any Commerce with Hereticks unless it were to correct and instruct them, but not to confer with them upon equal Terms: For which Reason they begg'd humbly of him that no such Assembly might be call'd.

*Michael*



*Michael* having given a favourable Answer to this Request, and allow'd them a full Liberty to do as they pleased, they thought they had now a fair Opportunity put into their Hands to re-establish entirely the Practice of the Catholick Church in Honouring Images. Upon which going in a Body to him one of them made a very learned and eloquent Discourse upon that Subject. *Michael* listen'd very peaceably to it, though he understood not a Word of what was said. But they were not a little surprized to hear him give the following Answer. *Though I believe you have said the finest and most reasonable Things in the World, I don't think however that they regard me, who never was a Worshipper of Images. I judge it therefore best for you and me to continue as we are. I shall change nothing on either Side, but let every one do as he pleases. So that you may re-establish your Images if you think fitting, provided it be not in the imperial City, where I will not suffer any Alteration to be made.* Whereupon the Bishops retired, thinking they had gain'd a considerable Point for the first Time. And so it was, if he had dealt sincerely with them. But he only spoke so to amuze the Catholicks, till he was deliver'd from a dangerous War, which he had upon his Hands.

This was raised against him by the Commander of a Legion in the *East* to revenge the barbarous Death of his Benefactor *Leo*, who had bestow'd it upon him. As he had gain'd a great Credit in the Army, a considerable Part of it revolted in Favour of him, and he was very successful at first, but was afterwards overthrown and entirely crush'd by him. After which *Michael* threw off the Mask, and became as great an Enemy to the Church as any had been before him. For  
besides

besides that he took *Copronymus* for his Pattern of Cruelty, he surpass'd him in Impiety in Maintaining numberless Extravagances; as that the Sabbath ought to be kept according to the Custom of the *Jews*; that there were neither Devils nor Prophets, nor Resurrection; that Fornication was no Sin; that we ought always to Swear by God to make ourselves be believed, and numberless such other Impieties. Nay he proceeded even to that Phantastical Extravagance as to maintain that *Judas*, who betray'd *Christ*, was saved. And as to the Article of Images, he not only revoked the Permission he had given the Bishops to re-establish them every where but at *Constantinople*, but persecuted those who honour'd them in a most cruel Manner, and particularly the Monks, against whom he declared open War after the Example of *Copronymus*. All the Bishops and Abbots, whom he had recall'd, were likewise sent back into Banishment. In a Word, he was no less cruel to Catholicks than any of his *Iconoclast* Predecessors had been before him, and he would even have his Son *Theophilus*, whom he had taken for his Colleague in the Empire, make his Apprenticeship of Cruelty by Charging him to torture *Euthymius* the holy Bishop of *Sardis*, till he should die of his Torments.

In the mean Time the *Saracens* of *Spain*, who were extremely multiplied, and sought for Countries to transport Colonies to, finding the Isle of *Crete* almost abandon'd during the civil War, easily made themselves Masters of it. Nay they defeated two of *Michael's* Armies, which he had sent to retake it, and built in it a considerable Town, which they call'd *Candix*, from whence the whole Island has since taken the Name of *Candie*, which being a long Time after taken  
from

from the *Turks* fell again unhappily into their Hands not many Years ago.

This Blow affected *Michael* very sensibly; for he fear'd it might draw Enemies upon him from the *West*, and therefore judg'd it necessary to sue the Pope, and renew his Alliance with the King of *France*: For which End he sent Embassadors to both with Letters, wherein he gave a very unfair Account of his ill Treatment of the Catholics; pretending that he had only forbid them some superstitious Abuses. As to the King of *France* he accepted of the Alliance offer'd him, and sent two Bishops with *Michael's* Embassadors to conduct them to *Rome*. But the Pope would not so much as suffer them to make any Stay there; because he plainly saw *Michael's* Insincerity, and that he had sent them for no other End than to impose upon him by Disguising his true Sentiments, and wicked Dispositions, which appear'd but too plainly in his Actions.

In Effect, whilst this deceitful Prince was endeavouring to put a Cheat upon the Pope by false Representations made of Matters by his Embassadors, he carried on his Persecution against Catholics with as much Violence as ever, and continued in their Banishment the most zealous Defenders of the Faith. Amongst others the most admirable *Theodore the Studite*, whom God had opposed as a strong Bulwark against the furious Attacks of the *Iconoclast* Emperors went that Year to receive in Heaven the Crown of his glorious Combats for the Church. He died in the Island *Calcite* on the 11th of *November* An. 826. in the 67th Year of his Age, having inserted in his Will, which is wholly Spiritual his Profession of Faith, wherein he declares that he embraces with his whole Heart the Doctrine of the seven  
first

first general Councils, and in particular that relating to Images, and the Intercession and Reliques of Saints, all which were opposed by the *Iconoclasts*. But God himself was pleased to declare his Sanctity by a Miracle. For his Body being taken up eighteen Years after his Death was found not only uncorrupt, but yielding an agreeable Smell. After which it was carried barefaced on a Bier magnificently dress'd up as on a Chair of Triumph to the Monastery of *Studius* attended by the Patriarch, and the whole Court, who went out to meet it with lighted Torches in their Hands.

The Year after the Body of the holy Patriarch *Nicephorus* being also found uncorrupt after it had laid eighteen Years buried in the Island, where he died in the fourteenth Year of his Banishment, received still greater Honours. For it was carried by Patricians follow'd by the young Emperor to *St. Sophie*: Whence it was translated with all sort of Magnificence to the stately Monument prepared for it by the Patriarch *Methodius* in the Church of the Apostles near the Tombs of the Emperors. And truly no Honours were too great for a Person, who with an eminent Sanctity and glorious Confession join'd a profound Learning, which he constantly employ'd against the *Iconoclasts*, whom he attack'd by Word of Mouth and Writing to his very Death, which happen'd in the one and seventieth Year of his Age by a kind of Martyrdom in his Place of Banishment, whence the Emperor *Michael* never would recall him even when he recall'd many other Monks.

'Twas thus that *Michael* got rid of these two great Men, whose Courage and Virtue were insupportable to his impious and vicious Life, which



at that Time became notoriously Scandalous by a Sacrilege, which lost him whatever the *Greeks* were still Masters of in the *West*. For his Empress being dead he fell desperately in Love with a Religious call *Euphrosine*, and said to be the Daughter of *Constantin* and *Irenè*: And to facilitate the Matter he got himself to be entreated by the Patricians and Senators to marry again, upon the ridiculous Pretence, that it was not decent that the Wives of those who had a Master should be without a Mistress. However that be, he scrupled not either at the Sacrilege or Scandal it would give, but married the Princess, who in all Likelihood was not unwilling to exchange her Veil for an imperial Crown. But he soon found that the Sin of a wicked Man is often permitted by the divine Justice to become the Instrument of it's own Punishment.

For one *Euphemius*, who commanded a Company in *Sicily* being encouraged by the Emperor's Example to satisfy his brutal Passion, forced a Religious out of her Monastery in the Town, where he was in Garrison. But her Brothers went themselves to the Emperor to complain of the Violence offer'd to their Sister, and demand Justice of him. The Emperor, who saw the Blackness of the Crime in another, which the Violence of his Passion would not suffer him to see in himself, sent Orders to the Governor of *Sicily* to inform himself exactly of the Truth of the Fact, and if the Captain was found guilty, to cut off his Nose first, and then punish him according to the utmost Rigour of the Law. *Euphemius*, who had timely Notice of it, having the Soldiers of his Company for him, and several other Officers to stand by him, easily beat back the Men, whom the Governor had sent to take him. Then passing

sing over into *Africa* promised the *Emire* of the *Saracens* to deliver up *Sicily* to him by Means of the Intelligence and strong Party he had there, if he would assist him with all his Forces to make him Emperor.

The *Emire* fail'd not to lay hold of so fair an Occasion of Enlarging the Empire of the *Saracens*. For he pass'd over immediately with a powerful Army into *Sicily*, where the Governor not having Forces enough to oppose him, and *Euphemius's* Party declaring openly for him, most of the Towns open'd their Gates to prevent their being taken by Force and demolish'd by the *Saracens*, and proclaim'd *Euphemius* Emperor. But he enjoy'd not long his imaginary Empire. For being advanced some Paces before his Army, which he commanded to halt, whilst he was exhorting the *Syracusans*, who appear'd in Arms upon the Walls to surrender themselves, two valiant Men, who could not bear to see this Traytor to deliver up unpunish'd to Infidels so beautiful a Part of the Empire, came out of the Town and made up to him as if they came to salute him Emperor in the Name of their Fellow-Citizens. But in the very Instant that this unhappy Usurper was bowing down to receive them, one of them, who was upon his Knees, catching fast hold of him by the Hair of his Head, the other struck it off with his Sword, and so deprived him both of Empire and Life. They could not however drive away the *Saracens*, to whom both *Syracusa* and most of the other Towns were forced to submit. After which passing over into *Italy* they made themselves Masters of the greatest Part of what the *Greeks* still had in *Calabria* and the *Pouille*. The maritime Places also of *Dalmatia* seeing those Wretches so shame-

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fully

fully driven out of *Italy*, threw off the Yoke of the Empire, and set themselves at Liberty. So that the *Greeks*, whom the Heresy of the *Iconoclasts* had deprived of the *Exarchate* of *Ravenna*, the Towns of *Pentapolis* and *Rome* itself together with the Title of the Empire of the *West*, lost now also through the Impiety of an *Iconoclast* Emperor the Dominions, they had till then retain'd.

This Emperor having thus drawn on himself by his Sacrilege and Impiety the just Vengeance of Heaven died of a Flux at *Constantinople* on the first of *October* An. 826. being cover'd with Infamy, oppress'd with interiour Anguish, and loaden with the Curses of his Subjects for having in so short a Time lost the Island of *Candia*, most Part of the *Cyclades*, *Sicily*, *Calabria* the *Pouille* and *Dalmatia*, and deprived his Successors together with those Provinces of all Hopes of ever Re-establishing their Empire in the *West*.

### *Theophilus.*

**M**ICHAEL being dead his Son *Theophilus* remain'd sole Emperor, and the first Thing he did was to call to a severe Account the Assassins of *Leo*. For though his Father *Michael* was owing to them for the Empire, he look'd upon it as a dangerous Precedent to let the Murderers of a Prince escape unpunish'd; who were therefore all condemn'd to lose their Heads. After that he sent the Empress *Euphrosine* back to her Monastery to do Penance for the Sacrilege she had committed in Violating her solemn Vows. Which two Acts of Justice gain'd him very much the Esteem and Applause of the People.

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The next Thing he had to do was to look out for an Empress to supply her Place: And in this he consulted not State Politicks, as Princes usually do, but acted rather like a private Man, who seeks to have one, whose Humour and Person will make her an agreeable domestick Companion. I shall give the Reader a full Account of the Method he took, both because the Story is curious, and because the Person whom Providence directed him to and design'd for the Destroyer of *Iconoclasm*, will make a considerable Figure in the remaining Part of this History.

He took a List of those amongst the Nobility, who were esteem'd the most celebrated Beauties, and assembled them all together in the great Room call'd the *Pearl*; where holding a golden Apple in his Hand which he design'd to present to the Person, whom he should make Choice of for his Spouse; as he was considering them one after another, and in his Walk came near a Lady of Quality, call'd *Icasia*, who besides an uncommon Wit was that sort of Beauty, which makes an Impression at first Sight, he found himself immediately affected with it, and stopp'd suddenly, as if he had been fix'd by some irresistible Charm. Then looking upon her with a certain amorous Smile; *it must be granted Madam*, said he, *that Women are dangerous Creatures, since one single Woman has been the Cause of all our Evils.* To which the fair *Icasia* answer'd upon the Spot, *but Sir, has not a Woman been also to us the Cause of all Good?* This Answer in which however there appears nothing that is Shocking, lost her the Empire. For whether he thought it was too pert an Answer in a young Lady at the first Sight of a Lover, or was afraid to marry one that set up for a Wit as well as Beauty, with which she



might prove troublesome to him, as it sometimes happens, whatever his Reason was, having stood pensive for some Moments, he took his Resolution all at once, and passing briskly forward without hazarding to cast his Eyes again upon her, he went straight to another beautiful Person call'd *Theodora*, to whom he presented the Apple and Empire, of which *Icasia* had deprived herself by shewing her Wit unseasonably.

This *Theodora* was the Daughter of *Marin* and *Theodista*, both of the chief Nobility of *Paphlagonia*, who had always been steady in the Profession of the Catholick Faith, and Practice of solid Christian Piety; which *Theodora* cultivated in her Heart, though whilst *Theophilus* was alive she was forced to conceal it for a greater good; yet so as to do nothing contrary to the Principles of her Religion. Her Marriage was solemnized with extraordinary Pomp, and the Emperor, who had a strange Mixture of good Qualities and the worst of Vices, as will appear hereafter, to gain still more and more the Affection of the People, and the Character of a Prince that loved Justice and the publick Good, continued to do Things, which have few Examples even in Princes, whom those two Virtues have render'd famous in History. For besides that he took great Care that his Officers did strict Justice to every Body, he set aside one Day in the Week to ride as slowly as he could quite cross the Town, on Purpose to give free Access to all such as had any Complaints to make, and fail'd not to do them Justice out of Hand without Regard to Persons; in so much that having heard a second Time the Complaints of a Widow, that *Patronas* the Empress's Brother continued contrary to Law to build a great Palace so near to her House, as to spoil entirely the Prospect

pect of it, he caused him though his own Brother in Law to be severely chastised in his Presence, and commanded the Palace to be immediately demolish'd, and the Ground and Materials to be given to the Widow.

He did not even spare the Empress herself on a certain Occasion, in which he shew'd that he preferr'd the publick Good before the private Interest of a Person so dear to him. For as he was one Day looking out of the Window of his Palace, and saw a very fine Ship, which appear'd to be extremely loaden entring the Port, he had the Curiosity to go himself to see who it was for: And being told that it belong'd to the Empress, for whom it was loaden with all sorts of rich Merchandizes, which were to be sold at *Constantinople* for her Profit, he order'd all the Seamen to come out with the Goods belonging to them, and then commanded Fire to be set to the Ship, notwithstanding the extreme Mortification it gave to the Empress, whom he reprimanded severely, and reproach'd, that whereas God had made him an Emperor, she would make a Merchant of him: Adding that to traffick was the Privilege and Property of Subjects, who had no other Means to subsist and make themselves easy. He also took a peculiar Care to keep the common People from being oppress'd by the Avarice of those, who used to set an excessive Price upon Things, or put off sophisticated Goods. For which End he went himself with his Guards about him to the Markets to see whether the Magistrates did their Duty, and every Thing were done according to the Order he had establish'd.

Who would not think a People happy under such an Emperor? And so they would have been, if his good Qualities had not been even more  
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than counterballanced by his Vices, which were enormous to an excessive Degree. For he was Cholerick even to a Fury, Revengeful, and Suspicious: In so much that he gave Credit to the most groundless Accusations that Malice could invent even of the greatest Men of the Empire, who had served him with the utmost Fidelity: And his Suspicions though never so groundless were the constant Forerunners of some cruel Orders. He even had the Weakness or rather Wickedness to consult Magicians, the chief and most impious of which he raised to the patriarchal See. And as to his Religion he was so violent an *Iconoclast*, that, to express all in one Word, he surpass'd all his Predecessors in Cruelty to Catholicks, whom he never suffer'd to enjoy any Repose during the whole Time of his Reign.

Amongst other Means of his own Invention to destroy Catholicks, he gave express Charge to the Gatherers of the Taxes in the Provinces to oblige the People when they came to pay their Taxes to declare that they renounced Images; and in Case of Refusal to put them in Prison as if they had not paid. Which was the Occasion that many renounced their Religion in Appearance to screen themselves from such a grievous Vexation. Besides this, whereas his Predecessor had left the Pictures of Saints for Ornament, forbidding only to have them honour'd with the Title of Saints, which he said belong'd to God alone, *Theophilus* on the contrary not only commanded all holy Pictures to be destroy'd, but raised a most cruel Persecution against all Painters, whom he threaten'd to punish with Death, if they refused to shew their Abhorrence of such Pictures by spitting and trampling upon them: On Occasion whereof the illustrious Confession of a holy Religious

Religious call'd *Lazarus* who was an excellent Painter, deserves the Admiration of all Mankind.

*Theophilus* having in vain tried all Ways possible to gain him by Promises and Caresses, commanded him to be Whipt so cruelly, that every Body expected he would die of it. But the Tyrant understanding some Time after that he was recover'd of the desperate Condition he had been in; and continued Painting as before, fell into such a Rage to see himself overcome, that he caused Plates of burning Iron to be clapt to the Palms of his Hands till the Flesh being consumed almost to the Bones he fainted away with the Violence of the Pain, and laid stretch'd on the Ground without any Sign of Life. So that *Theophilus* being told that he was on the Point of Expiring made no Difficulty of yielding to the Empress's Request to have him given up to her as one, who though he should live, would never have the Use of his Hands. However he recover'd as before, and being kept conceal'd in a Church of *St. John Baptist* he found Means to use his Hands, burnt as they were, in Drawing the Picture of that Saint, which was render'd famous by the Miracles reported to have been wrought by it. But this is very certain, that this admirable Painter, who survived *Theophilus*, employ'd the rest of his Life in Repairing the Destruction of Pictures caused by that Tyrant, and drew a very excellent one of our Saviour, which was put over the brazen Gate in the Room of that, which *Leo the Armenian* had caused to be pull'd down.

However we must not imagine that the Empress, though she saved the Life of this Saint, made publickly Profession of honouring Images, which the Emperor would not have suffer'd, and she



she thought herself under no Obligation of Practising in Publick, but contented herself to do it in private. This occasions the relating a very pleasant Story of her. There was at Court a Fool call'd *Dandery*, who diverted the Emperor by saying and doing Things out of the Way. This Fool, who had the Liberty to go wherever he pleased, came one Day bolting into the Empress's Closet, whilst she was at her Prayers before several pious Images, which she kept Secretly in her private Oratory, and being ask'd by the Fool what they were, she somewhat startled at the Question answer'd they were the Babies of her little Daughters. *Dandery* going soon after, as he used to do, to the Emperor's Dinner, and being ask'd from whence he came, told the Emperor he had been with *Mama* (for so he call'd the Empress) and seen the prettiest Babies in the World. The Emperor not doubting but they were Images, which the Empress kept privately, started up from the Table, and went straght to her Appartment, where in the first Transport of his Fury he treated her with all the bad Language his Passion suggested to him. But the Empress who put on a Smile, and seem'd to take a Pleasure to hear him vent the Fire of his Passion, burst out at Length into a violent Laughter and said: *What, Sir, have you suffer'd yourself to be imposed upon by a Fool, who seeing me in the Looking Glass in the Midst of my Maids took our Pictures in the Glass for real Images, which gave us no small Diversion.* This Answer appeased the Emperor, who finding the Story pleasant, and not unlike to *Dandery's* usual Mistakes could not forbear Laughing himself, and so went back to his Dinner.

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He continued however to persecute the Catholics with the utmost Fury, particularly the Monks, who were driven out of their Monasteries, and all were strictly forbid to give them any Harbour or Relief: So that many of them being forced to wander up and down in desert Places died with Hunger and other Hardships; and though some, whether overcome with the Greatness of their Sufferings or weary of their Profession threw off their Habits and return'd to the World, others had the Generosity to go in a Body to the Emperor, and reproach him to his Face with his Cruelty; which Liberty procured them a glorious Martyrdom. For being condemn'd to be most inhumanly scourged, they all died of their Wounds, whilst they were upon their Way to Banishment, and God honour'd their illustrious Victory by the Incorruptibleness of their Bodies, which though thrown by their Executioners into a filthy Sink remain'd notwithstanding incorrupt in the midst of Corruption.

But the most fatal Blow the Emperor gave to the Church of *Constantinople* was his Depriving her of the illustrious *Methodius*; and raising to the patriarchal See the most wicked Man of the Empire. This was one deeply read in the black Art call'd *John*, who to cover his Impiety had taken the Habit of a Monk. But as he was a Man of Wit and Learning he gain'd so effectually the Esteem of the former Emperor *Michael*, that he made him his Son *Theophilus's* Master, whom together with the Sciences he taught him, he inspired with the damnable Curiosity of Prying by the Spells of Art-magick into future Events. In Effect, this wicked Wretch, who was *Theophilus's* great Confident and Oracle, and whom he rais'd to the patriarchal Throne, had built a large  
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House at some Distance from the Town, where in subterraneous Appartments he offer'd his abominable Sacrifices to the Devil, and practis'd his magical Enchantments, by Means whereof he rais'd Spirits, either to learn of them Things to come, or exercise his Malice upon Bodies. Thither he often brought *Theophilus*, sometimes to satisfy his Curiosity, and sometimes to procure him the Means to get rid of his Enemies by magical Spells. Thither also he decoy'd Women of all Sorts of Conditions under Pretence of Discovering to them the Secrets they desired to know, and there glutted with them his brutal Lust, which they could not resist, when they had once put themselves under his and the Devil's Power.

This was the Man, whom *Theophilus* made Patriarch of *Constantinople*, and who employ'd his utmost Power and Malice to destroy Catholics, and set up *Iconoclasm*. But what facilitated his so Doing was, that *Theophilus* had sometime before banish'd *Methodius* from *Constantinople*, whom upon the Loss of a considerable Battel, which he fought against the *Saracens*, he treated most barbarously under Pretence, that *Methodius* being the great Abetter and Support of Idolatry in Worshipping of Images was the chief Occasion of all the Misfortunes that befell the Empire. For which having first made a Man break all his Teeth, he caused him to be, as it were, buried alive with two Thieves in a Grotto destined for a Sepulchre, where a Fisherman had Orders to bring him daily some miserable Scraps to keep him just alive, and make him suffer a long Death in this sort of Sepulchre, where one of the Thieves Dying, the intollerable stench of his Body became an additional Torment, and turn'd the Grotto into a real Sepulchre, in which the Saint continued  
for



for almost seven Years, till *Theophilus* finding no Man so capable, as he was, to explain the Difficulties he met with in Authors, in the Reading of which he took great Delight, order'd him to be released, and even kept him by him in his Palace to consult him the more commodiously: Which however occasion'd no Abatement of the Persecution; particularly after he had the Happiness to have a Son born, and a prosperous Campaign against the *Saracens*; all which he attributed to his Zeal against Idolatry.

Till then his Empress had brought him no Son, and he desired passionately to have one to succeed him in the Empire, as he had been promised by his Patriarch the Magician, and an old Enchantress, whom according to his abominable Custom he had consulted to know, who should be his Successor. But the same Enchantress had foretold that the Son, who should succeed him, would re-establish the Worship of Images. However he was so transported with Joy at the Birth of a Son, whom he call'd *Michael*, and crown'd with his own Hands, that he was not much concern'd about the second Part of the Prediction, flattering himself that he should find Means to hinder the Accomplishment of it. For which End he often made *Theodisius* his prime Minister and the Empress *Theodora* swear with the most horrible Imprecations, that if he should die before his Son was of Age to govern, they would never suffer the Worship of Idols to be re-establish'd: Which *Theodora* could safely swear, because the Images of *Christ* and his Saints are no Idols.

But besides the Happiness of having a Son he gain'd that Year a great Battel against the *Saracens*, from whom after the Defeat of their Army he took the Towns of *Samosate* and *Sosopatra* in  
Syria



*Syria*, and demolish'd them entirely; notwithstanding the earnest Entreaties of the *Calif Amerumnas* (whose Country they were) to have them spared in Consideration of him: Which Disregard to *Amerumnas* cost *Theophilus* his Crown and Life, as we shall see immediately. However he enter'd *Constantinople* in Triumph, and was there received by all the Orders with the greatest Demonstrations of Esteem and Joy. So that being now victorious abroad and Master at Home, he thought himself in a Condition to destroy Catholicks without any Fear of Opposition. But as *Jesus Christ* calm'd in a Moment the Winds and Seas, when they were just ready to swallow the Vessel, in which he was with his Disciples, so when all Things seem'd to be desperate, and Religion was threaten'd with such a violent Storm of Persecution, that it's Ruin appear'd to be unavoidable, God calm'd on a sudden these Winds and Storms, and restored a solid Peace and Tranquillity in the Church by the entire Destruction of *Iconoclasm*, which ended with the Life of this Emperor.

For whilst he thought of nothing but enjoying the Fruits of his Victory, *Amerumnas*, who resented highly the Affront he had received the Year before, was resolved either to perish, or revenge himself by the utter Destruction of *Amorium*, which being the Town where *Theophilus's* Father was born, he regarded as his own Country. *Amerumnas* therefore advanced towards *Capadocia* and *Pbrygia* with a formidable Army of the choicest Men of his whole Empire, who all had *Amorium* written upon their Bucklars to signify that their Design was to sacrifice that Town to the Revenge of their Master. Upon the News whereof, the Emperor having gather'd together  
all

all his Forces march'd with such Diligence to the succour of the Town, that he came time enough to throw a considerable Part of them into it, together with forty Men of Rank, who were the bravest of his Officers, and resolved to defend it to the last. But the *Calif's* Son, who came before his Father at the Head of the greatest Part of his Army, having overtaken him in his Retreat obliged him to come to a Battel, in which the Emperor's Army extremely weaken'd by the Succour he had thrown into *Amorium*, was entirely defeated and almost all cut to Pieces: The Emperor himself escaping narrowly with a few Men about him by the Favour of the Night.

After this Victory *Amerumnas* joining his Forces with his Son's victorious Army laid Siege to *Amorium*, which defended itself so bravely, that the *Saracens* were upon the Point of raising the Siege, when the Town was taken by the Treachery of a Deserter, who discover'd to the Besiegers a secret Place, by which it was surprized. The Revenge, which *Amerumnas* took on this Occasion is without Example. For after having either massacred without Mercy, or made Slaves without Exception of Persons of all that were found in the Town whether Inhabitants or Strangers, he set Fire to all Parts of it, and destroy'd so entirely all the Buildings whether sacred or prophane, that of one of the most beautiful Towns of the *East*, there remain'd nothing but a frightful Heap of Ruins and Ashes. After which the revengeful *Amerumnas* insulted over the Embassadors sent by *Theophilus* to offer an excessive Sum of Money for the Ransom of the forty Officers, some of which were the Emperor's own Relations, and bid them go tell their Master what they had seen at *Amorium*, and the State he had reduced it to in Consideration  
of

of him. Then all those brave Officers had their Heads cut off, and died Martyrs both of Loyalty and Religion by refusing to save their Lives, as the *Calif* offer'd them, by renouncing *Jesus Christ*.

After this terrible Blow the unhappy *Theophilus* returning to *Constantinople* overwhelm'd with Confusion fell into so deep a Melancholy, that he would neither eat nor drink, and 'twas with a great Deal of Trouble that they got him to take a little Nourishment, and drink a little Snow-Water, for he refused to take any other Drink. But what threw him into the utmost Despair was, that having a violent Passion to be revenged of the *Saracens* in the next Campaign, and for that End sent into *France* to demand Succours, he had News brought him, that his Embassador fell sick and died upon the Way: So that as the Year was already considerably advanced, he plainly saw Succours could not come Time enough from so great a Distance: Which encreased his Melancholy to such a Degree, that it threw him into a violent Sicknefs, which by the Snow-waters, that had corrupted his Bowels turn'd into a Flux, and put an End to his Life.

### *Michael and Theodora.*

**U**PON the Death of this Emperor, *Theoetistus* the Chancellor and *Manuel* General of the Army, whom *Theophilus* had appointed to take Care of the young Emperor's Education, and assist *Theodora* with their Counsel, conducted them both with great Pomp to the *Hippodrome*, or great Place, which faces the Palace, and there *Michael*, who was but four Years old, was proclaim'd Emperor, and his Mother *Theodora* Empress; and all were obliged to swear solemnly, that they would



would hazard their Lives in Defence of their Right to the imperial Crown.

*Theodora*, who had always been a sound Catholick, though she had upon prudential Motives conceal'd her honouring of Images, seeing herself absolute Mistress, thought seriously of Re-establishing the ancient Worship. But as she was no less discreet than zealous, and knew that many even of the Nobility were become *Iconoclasts* in the three preceding Reigns of *Leo*, *Michael*, and *Theophilus*, she was sensible that it was not to be undertaken but with the greatest Caution: And therefore judg'd it Necessary to take the Advice of her two chief Counsellors *Theoctistus* and *Manuel*, to whom she propos'd the Matter in a private Conference without the least Intimation of her own Mind, that they might have full Liberty to give their Judgment in a Matter of that Importance. They did so, but differ'd in their Opinions. For *Theoctistus* was for Re-establishing the ancient Worship whatever Difficulties they should meet with notwithstanding. But *Manuel*, who fear'd the Consequences of drawing upon them the Displeasure of so many of the Nobility, thought it more advisable to leave Things as they were. For which Reason the Empress fearing moreover to encrease the Number of Enemies by having also *Manuel* and his whole Army against her, if she should join openly with *Theoctistus*, came to no Resolution, but left the Thing undecided in Hopes, that some providential Turn might render *Manuel* more favourable to her, as in effect it happen'd not long after.

For Almighty God, to whom the good Intentions of this pious Princess were highly pleasing, wrought one of those Wonders of his infinite Power in the entire Change of *Manuel's* former  
I Disposition.



Disposition. For this General soon after the private Conference falling sick of a Distemper, which his Physicians were utter Strangers to, and being reduced to the last Extremity, so that his Life was despair'd of, some of the Disciples of the famous *Theodore* the *Studite* came to him, and gave him a positive Assurance of a speedy Recovery, provided he would promise to employ his utmost Power and Credit for the Re-establishment of the Church's ancient Worship in Honouring of Images. *Manuel* accepting with his whole Heart so easy a Condition began immediately to recover, and in a short Time was in a Condition to go abroad, and acquaint the Empress with what had happen'd, as likewise his Resolution to join heartily with *Theoëstus* in Promoting the ancient Devotion to Images. The Empress, though agreeably surprized at this unexpected Change, did not at all applaud it; but, to engage him still the more, by a counterfeit Resistance, answer'd him very coldly, that it was her Opinion, that all Thoughts of that Affair ought to be laid aside; for that upon mature Consideration she was convinced they should meet with Difficulties not to be overcome; as himself had very wisely Judg'd before his Sickness. To which *Manuel* reply'd, that he was now of another Mind; and that having God of his Side as he was sure he had, he fear'd nothing. Besides that being Master of the Army, he could not think that any one would dare to attempt an Insurrection, when he had once declared himself. The Empress however persisting in her pretended Opposition, and objecting against it the Blemish it would cast upon the Memory of the deceas'd Emperor her Husband, for whom she always had the greatest Respect, the good *Manuel* lost all Patience, and falling  
into

into a violent Passion threaten'd her with the Vengeance of God, who (said he to the Empress) will punish you and your Son with the Loss both of Life and Empire, if you refuse to obey his Will, which I have manifested to you by so clear a Token.

This fully convinced the Empress, that *Manuel* was in earnest. She therefore dissembled no longer, but open'd her Heart freely to him, and assured him it was what of all Things in the World she desired most. Besides that her Mother *Theodisba*, her Uncles and Brothers, who were of the patrician Order, importuned her continually to it. But she gave him at the same to understand, that it ought to be brought about by peaceable Means, and without Noise or Violence: In effect she manag'd the Matter so dexterously, that it succeeded according to her Wishes.

She knew that amongst the Head Officers of the Empire some had made an outward Profession of *Iconoclasm* either out of Fear or Ambition, though they continued Catholics in their Hearts; and that others were not in their Hearts attach'd to any particular Religion, but were indifferent to all, and ready to conform to any according as Circumstances should determine them. With these the Empress treated separately in private Conferences; and by Opening herself freely to them, which they all took as a Mark of particular Esteem and Confidence, she gain'd them so entirely, that she was secure of having them upon all Occasions in her Interest.

After this she made the Chancellor *Theoctistus* call a general Assembly, in which besides the Persons now mention'd were present the Emperor's Council, the Senate and principal Magistrates of *Constantinople*; as likewise the Bishops the Abbots, and Heads of religious Orders. The Chancellor,

who presided in this Assembly, having lamented in a pathetick Discourse the many Misfortunes of the Empire in the Reigns of the preceding Emperors, which he shew'd to be all Owing to the unhappy Changes they had made in the Religion of their Fore-fathers, propos'd to the Consideration of the Assembly, whether it would not be expedient to restore Things to the State they were in before the furious Edict of *Leo the Isaurian* against Images. The Heads of the Senate and Nobility, who were all favourably disposed, and spoke first, gave their Opinion that this ought to be done. After this the Bishops and Abbots, who were Men of Learning, spoke with a great Deal of Force against the Changes that had been made, as having been carried on by violent Means against the Church's ancient Traditions: So that they came all unanimously to this Resolution, that a Petition should be presented to the Empress, that the Honour anciently pay'd to Images might be restored.

The Empress seeing that all Things succeeded according to her Wishes, judg'd that to give the finishing Stroke to this great Work, a sort of Ecclesiastical Synod should be call'd, that is, a general Assembly of the Clergy only, in which for the Instruction and Satisfaction of those, who had been seduced, the ancient Doctrine of the Church should be set forth from the Writings of such Fathers, as had been Witnesses of it, and maintain'd it against the Hereticks of their Times: And it was order'd, that every Body should have full Liberty allow'd him to propose his Objections and Doubts.

This Assembly was held in the Palace, because the wicked Patriarch *John*, who was first to be deposed for his abominable Crimes, which were

of



of publick Notoriety, was in Possession of the Cathedral. Now besides that there were always several Bishops at *Constantinople* either upon real or pretended Business, the Fame of this Assembly brought thither such Numbers both of Bishops, Abbots, and other Ecclesiasticks, that the Town was scarce able to contain them: And amongst these there were many, who bore the glorious Marks of their Sufferings for the Catholick Faith; and many more, who had been overcome by the Violence of Persecutions under the three former Emperors.

However it appear'd on this Occasion, that *Iconoclasm* had not made any considerable Conquests; and that the Generality of those, who had made Profession of it, had been dragg'd to it by meer Violence contrary to their real Conviction of Judgment and Dictates of Conscience. For the greatest Part of the Assembly, and amongst others several of those, who had been made Bishops by the *Iconoclast* Emperors, were no sooner met together in the Palace, but even before any Thing was propos'd to their Deliberation, set up their Voices all together, and cry'd out as loud as they could *Anathema* to those who had seduced them, and been Enemies to holy Images.

But to proceed orderly, and provide the Church of *Constantinople* with a Patriarch worthy of that high Station, the first Thing they did was to depose by unanimous Consent the wicked *John*, and place upon the patriarchal Throne the admirable *Methodius*, of whose Sufferings I have already given a full Account. The Choice of this great Man was received with a universal Applause, and was highly pleasing to the Empress, who look'd upon him as the fittest Person in the whole Em-



pire to re-establish Religion and Devotion in *Constantinople* by his Learning and eminent Virtue.

As to the Patriarch *John*, he fell into to such a furious Passion, that he was upon the Point of Laying violent Hands on himself, and refused obstinately to obey the Orders sent him to quit the patriarchal Palace: So that *Bardas* Brother to the Empress was obliged to have him carried away by Force into a Monastery, where he had not Command enough over his Passion to forbear committing a Sacrilege, which shew'd the extravagant Malice of the Man. For as there was an Image of our Saviour, and another of his blessed Mother set up in an eminent Place of his Monastery, he commanded his Deacon to mount up to them with a Ladder, and strike out their Eyes, saying by Way of Derision, that since they could not see, they ought not to have Eyes. Which sacrilegious Action inflamed the Zeal of the Empress *Theodora* to such a Degree against this wicked Wretch, that she gave Orders out of Hand to have his Eyes pluck'd out: But was prevail'd upon by the Entreaties of those that were about her to mitigate the Punishment by Changing it into two hundred Lashes so well laid on by her Guards, that the Smart of them made him remember a long Time after those Images, the Memory whereof he design'd to abolish.

In the mean Time the Synod of *Constantinople*, in which *Methodius* presided, agreed unanimously in Confirming the Decrees of the second Council of *Nicea*; and made one for the Re-establishment of Images in all Parts of the Empire, and the Deprivation of all such Bishops and Priests as should refuse to renounce their Heresy. But on the other Hand, to observe Ecclesiastical Discipline, it was decreed, that those who were dis-  
posed

posed to be reconciled to their mother-Church, should make Satisfaction for the Scandal they had given by some Penance according to the Canons drawn up for that Purpose by *Methodius* in Proportion to the Quality of each one's Crime.

The Synod being thus happily ended, the Empress, to complete this great Work, gave Orders, that the Decree for Re-establishing of holy Images should be executed with a Pomp suitable to her Zeal and the Devotion of the People of *Constantinople*, who were overjoy'd to see themselves deliver'd from the Restraint they had been under in the preceding Reigns. The first *Sunday* of *Lent* was pitch'd upon for this solemn Ceremony, on which Day the Patriarch, follow'd by numberless People and the whole Body of the Clergy, went early in the Morning to the great Church of *St. Sophia*, whither also the Empress attended by the whole Court and Magistrates of the City conducted the young Emperor her Son; and from thence they all walk'd together in a solemn Procession to the City with lighted Torches in their Hands, and the Cross and holy Images carried before them as in Triumph, and to make a kind of publick Attonement for the Crimes of their Fore-fathers. After which the excellent Hymn composed by the holy Confessor *Theophanes* was sung; and then began a solemn Mass, during which the Images were set up in the Church with loud Acclamations of Joy, and Proclamation was made with great Solemnity, that it was the Feast of Orthodoxy; which was afterwards kept annually by that Name on the same Day, and with the same Solemnity.

Thus was the Heresy of *Iconoclasm*, which had been set up by *Leo the Isaurian*, and had exercised a tyrannical Power in the *East* for the space of sixscore Years, utterly extinguish'd by the Pru-

dence and unshaken Resolution of the Empress *Theodora*, whom God was pleased to bless during the whole Time of her Regency, which lasted fourteen Years, with an uninterrupted Course of Prosperity; so that she made herself be both fear'd and respected by all her neighbouring Princes, and principally by the *Bulgarians*, whom God had often made Use of as the Instruments of his Justice to punish the Wickedness of the *Iconoclast* Emperors, and whom he subjected in some Manner to her at the same Time, that upon the Sight of a holy Picture he subjected them to the Evangelical Law.

*Bogoris* their King, who had struck up a Peace with the preceding Emperor *Theophilus*, seeing that after his Death the whole Government of the Empire was in the Hands of a Woman, had the Brutality to send Heralds to declare War against her without any justifiable Pretence or Provocation. But the courageous Empress not at all intimidated sent them back with such a resolute Answer, that *Bogoris* charm'd with her masculine Courage conceived from thence forward the highest Esteem and Veneration for her Person. So that, instead of Pursuing his Warlike Intentions, he became himself a Petitioner for Peace, which was concluded upon this single Condition, that the King should release *Theodore Cupbaras* a Person of great Merit, whom the Empress intended to employ, and that she should on the other Hand set at Liberty the King's Sister, who had been made a Prisoner during the War. This *Bulgarian* Princess being whilst she was a Prisoner become a Christian by the Exhortations and edifying Example of *Theodora*, endeavour'd also to convert the King her Brother, whom *Theodore Cupbaras*, though his Prisoner, had often press'd to renounce Paganism,

Paganism, and instructed in the Mysteries of Christian Religion. But though favourably disposed by these Means, that which gave the finishing Stroke to his Conversion was the Sight of a Picture of the last Judgment.

This Prince, who lov'd Hunting passionately, had a great Number of Pictures relating to that Sort of Diversion, with which he used to amuse himself when the Weather would not permit him to go abroad. But as it happen'd that there was at that Time in *Bulgaria* a Monk call'd *Metbodius*, who came from *Rome*, and was there become an eminent Painter, the King made Choice of him to paint a new House he had built, and only directed him in general to represent Objects of Terror, which he took a peculiar Pleasure to look at, such as the Combats of Huntsmen with wild Boars, Lions, and Tigers. But *Metbodius*, to whose Thoughts nothing occur'd more terrible than the last Judgment, made Choice of that, and painted it admirably well with all its Circumstances that are most terrifying, particularly that of the Reprobate on the left Hand deliver'd up by the Sentence of the Judge to Devils, who threw them into Hell-fire. *Bogoris* upon the Sight of this Picture and the Painter's Explanation of it was so sensibly touch'd, God at the same Time touching his Heart with his holy Grace, that he embraced the Faith of *Christ* without any further Delay, and was soon after baptized taking the Name of *Michael* in Consideration of the young Emperor.

This resolute Action revolted his Subjects against him, who took up Arms in Defence of their old Superstitions. But it served only to give a greater Lustre both to his Conversion and the Glory of *Jesus Christ* by extending his Conquest  
over



over the whole Nation of the *Bulgarians*. For the King looking upon himself as invincible by being under the Protection of *Jesus Christ*, made no Difficulty to march with a Handful of Men against the numerous Army of his rebellious Subjects, who were so terrify'd at the Sight of the Cross appearing at the Head of the King's Troops, that throwing down their Arms they took to their Heels, and soon after sent to ask Pardon, and the Grace of Baptism; both which they obtain'd.

After which to take away all Occasion of Misunderstanding between the *Greeks* and *Bulgarians*, who had not Country enough to contain their great Multitudes, the King, who consider'd *Theodora* as his Benefactrice and spiritual Mother begg'd humbly of her a Tract of uncultivated Land belonging to the Empire, but bordering close upon his own Country, declaring that from thenceforward his Subjects and those of the Empire should be but one People. Which Request she granted with a good Grace: And after that the *Bulgarians* always paid her the same Respect and Submission, as if she had been their real Sovereign. Thus it was that a whole Pagan Nation, which for many Years had been the Scourge of the *Iconoclast* Emperors, was happily converted to the Faith of *Jesus Christ*, and became a peaceable Neighbour by the prudent Conduct of *Theodora*, and the casual Sight of one of those Images, the Veneration of which she had re-establish'd in the whole *East* with so much Honour and Success.

This great Work therefore being thus happily finish'd encouraged the Empress to undertake also the Conversion of the *Paulicians*, who were the Remains of the old *Manicheans*, and amongst

mongst numberless no less extravagant than abominable Errors had such a Hatred to the Cross, that they stuck at no Sort of Outrages and Indignities to express the Malice they bore it. This the Empress could not bear, and therefore resolved to use all Means possible either to gain them over to the Catholick Faith, or if they continued obstinate to purge the Empire of them, as she did effectually in a very short Time by the excessive Severity of her Lieutenants, who instead of using any Endeavours at all to gain them by mild and persuasive Methods, of which they ought at least to have first made a Trial, exercised all Sorts of Barbarities upon them, and made such a prodigious Slaughter of them, that the rest to avoid the like Treatment left the Country, and went over to the *Saracens*, who in after-times made good Use of them against the *Greeks*.

But though the Empress had no Hand in the Excesses committed by her Lieutenants, she reap'd this Benefit by it, that the Empire was entirely purged of this pernicious Vermin during the fourteen Years of her Regency, with which ended the publick Happiness and Peace; when her Son *Michael*, who was become the greatest Brute upon Earth, not being able to bear any longer either her Admonitions, or Presence, resolved to remove her at a Distance from him. But *Theodora*, instead of imitating the ambitious *Irenè*, who committed so many Crimes to maintain her Authority, took a quite contrary Course by preventing the Design of her unnatural Son, and made a voluntary Resignation of the Empire to avoid the embroiling it in a civil War, which her Resistance must have unavoidably occasion'd.

For

For this End she assembled together the Senate and King's Council, and bringing with her the Lord Treasurer, she told the Assembly that being resolved to retire from all publick Business, and apply herself wholly for the rest of her Days to the Concerns of the other World, she had call'd them together to give them an Account of the publick Money, least after her Retirement it should be said, that she had left the Emperor her Son an empty Exchequer. Then told them that with what she had found at her receiving the imperial Crown, and had added to it during her Administration, all publick Expences being defray'd, they should find in Gold and Silver a Sum, which according to Monsieur *Maimbourg's* Computation amounted to above seventy eight Millions of *French* Money: All which the stupid *Michael* in a few Years Time spent in Debaucheries; and a great Deal more accruing from the Sale of all the rich Plate belonging to the Crown, which he converted into Money to supply his Extravagances: So that being assassinated about twelve Years after *Theodora's* voluntary Abdication, there was but a very inconsiderable Sum found in the Exchequer.

This shews how vastly different the Conduct of the Son was from that of the Mother, who was most certainly a Princess of extraordinary Merit, and had the greatest Command over herself, as appear'd in her generous Contempt of the imperial Crown, which she might have easily maintain'd against such a brutal Son. Wherefore having given the Senate an Account of her Administration, she took her Leave of the Assembly in a very obliging and gracious Manner, and quitting the imperial Palace she retired to another with the Princesses her Daughters, where she

she spent her Time in the Practice of all Christian Virtues; whilst her Son govern'd by his Uncle *Bardas*, who encouraged him in all his Extravagances dishonour'd the Empire by a Life as infamous as that of *Heliogabalus* and *Nero*: For which Reason the Neighbourhood of so virtuous a Mother being insupportable to him, one Day, when according to her usual Practice she was gone to do her Devotions at our Lady's of *Blaquerns*, he caused her Head to be shaved and confined her to a Monastery; where without any other Change, than that of the Place of her Residence, she lived above eight Years till the Greek Schism was form'd by the wicked *Photius*, who usurped the See of *Constantinople*, after having by Violence and Caballing procured the Banishment of it's true Patriarch St. *Ignatius*, because he always refused to give the Veil to *Theodora*, whom her unnatural Son had forced into a Monastery. 'Twas upon this Occasion that Pope *Nicholas I.* wrote to her that excellent Letter, which is a perfect Elogium of her. It is dated *November 30. An. 867*, a few Days after which she departed this Life, and went to receive in Heaven the Crown prepared as a Reward of that eminent Holiness which the *Greeks* have always honour'd in her Person.

5 MA 56

F I N I S.



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5 MA 56

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